commonweal

The Editors
UNCIVIL DEFENSE

Political Limits
John Garvey • Thomas Power

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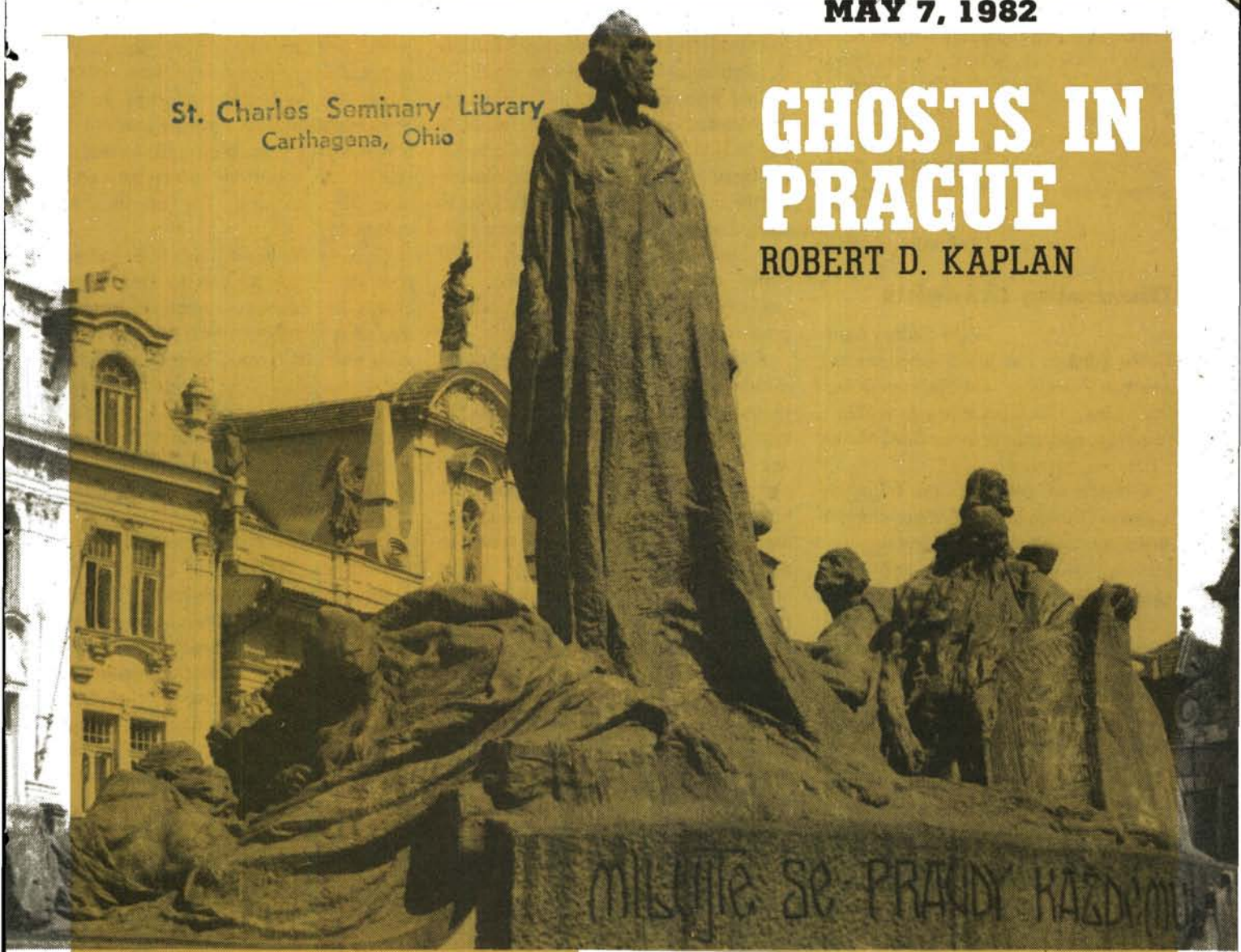
GHOSTS IN PRAGUE

ROBERT D. KAPLAN



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Correspondence

Today's victims

Albuquerque, N.M.

To the Editors: The issue of nuclear war is surely an important one [Mar. 12], but it seems worth noting that it is also a highly elitist issue. The plight of the survivors, stranded and dazed without food, water, medicines, schools, newspapers, shelter, or transportation, forced to watch their children sicken and die of diseases that were "conquered" years ago, is the plight of millions now. It has simply been brought home to *us* this time.

BARBARA FRANCIS

Disarming thoughts

Palo Cedro, Calif.

To the Editors: I've just finished reading Thomas Powers's "On Nuclear Disbelief" [Jan. 15]. The article provokes a response, particularly to the SAC Motto: "Peace is our profession."

Consider if you will, the following scenario: Russia launches a pre-emptive strike against the U.S., targeting our missile silos, air bases, and main strategic manufacturing. The strike is "sanitary"; that is, as little damage as possible is done to major metropolitan centers which are of little strategic importance. In all, fifteen to twenty million civilians are killed by blast or fall-out.

What is the U.S. response?

First consider the problem of knowledge; while five to fifteen minutes warning is available after the initial launch, it is probably only until impact is imminent that our radar and orbit tracking devices can discern the target area. It could be very difficult to tell whether a missile is aimed at San Francisco or the Nevada desert.

I'm sure the Pentagon has war-gamed this scenario exhaustively. Yet pretend you are a presidential advisor, or even the president himself; what to do? It is known that a high number of the Soviet targets would be large city areas containing both civilian and military forces. The Soviet objective is presumably to knock out our nuclear defenses in a "sanitizing" attack, hoping we will be unable to respond fully. However, we have many missiles in Trident submarines, presumably invulnerable to attack, and a large bomber force which is supposed to be in the air at first warning. How do you respond?

Does it make any sense to destroy several million or tens of millions of Russian civilians? Aren't these people innocent, just as our civilians are innocent? Did any of them make the decision to attack?

One response is that of vengeance; they started it, they should be made to pay in kind. Again, who pays? Certainly not those who made the decision. Assuming their population is stratified similar to ours, almost a majority of them are children and teen-age youth. Even in our "free" country, this portion of the population has no power over the political process.

A second response might be a limited sanitizing of our own; targeting only obviously military emplacements. Yet again, the fall-out and ecological damage, particularly to our West European allies, would cost the lives of countless other truly innocents. It perhaps could be argued that in doing so we would be neutralizing any further Soviet threat, and the loss of innocent life is regrettable, but necessary for the greater good (lesser evil?) of preventing Soviet world domination.

However, I truly wonder if our leaders, having made the decision to retaliate, would make a decision only to "sanitize" rather than launch everything we had in an effort to totally obliterate the Soviet Union. Given the inadequate target information, the probability of poor and broken communications between the launching authority and those making the target decisions (e.g. a submarine commander, or bomber crew) and simple outright rage at the Soviet Union for launching first, it seems improbable that there wouldn't be total retaliation, and subsequent total retaliation in kind by the Soviets. Published data indicates both sides have a total surplus of weapons; enough to annihilate each other several times over.

On the other hand . . . could we bring ourselves to do nothing? Possibly even surrender? Or pretend to surrender? Visions of "better dead than Red" well up, as well as anger, outrage, perhaps frustration. Certainly a massive popular uprising against the government is possible.

One wonders what would in fact happen if we simply did nothing? We might arm and prepare to defend against invasion, attempt to negotiate immediately for whatever concessions and trade-offs would permit us to survive. But many might ask, would survival be worth it? Or might we be better Red than dead? Someone should ask an eight-year-old or a mother with a newborn at the breast, or one of the countless survivalists who have been preparing for just such an eventuality.

Consider further if it would be indeed possible for the Soviets to invade and control our country without possibly reducing it to rubble first? We also have good guerrilla terrain, both in our cities and countryside. What good is it to capture a factory or refinery or cropland if the whole thing is radioactive? If we did nothing, what would the Soviets do next? Might even they be appalled at the destruction?

It appears to me that nuclear war is unwinnable. The price of victory is too expensive for either adversary. Human life is more precious than ideology. Practically, imposition of a viable autocratic rule upon the U.S. population would cost the Soviets a large percentage of their forces just to maintain order. The repugnance of the rest of the world would not be easily overcome either; probably what

(Continued on page 285)

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commonweal

INCIVILITY ABOUT CIVIL DEFENSE

IF YOU DON'T think about it too deeply, the idea of a civil defense program makes some sense. Not that thinking about it hasn't produced its own share of madness in the past. The last time we went through this, for instance, a Jesuit scholar pondered the matter and then, writing in *America* magazine, solemnly proclaimed that it was morally quite permissible for a shelter-owner to shoot down a non-shelter-owner who tried to intrude on his turf—a sort of Cold War fable of the grasshopper and the ant, we guess. And Governor Nelson Rockefeller of New York issued scores of thousands of booklets telling residents of the state exactly how to construct an air raid shelter in their backyards; it was only much later that someone remembered that in New York City, the most populous city in the state, millions of people had no backyards in the first place.

But even aside from such bizarre cultural side-effects, when you do seriously think about it, the idea of large-scale civil defense against nuclear war is preposterous. Consider: the atomic bomb the United States dropped on Hiroshima was a 15-kiloton weapon—that is, it had the explosive equivalent of 15,000 tons of TNT. Today atomic bombs are used to trigger hydrogen bombs. The U.S. hydrogen bomb tested at Bikini Atoll was a 15-megaton device, equivalent to 15 *million* tons of TNT—a thousand times the size of the Hiroshima bomb. As Senators Edward Kennedy and Mark O. Hatfield note in their new paperback, *Freeze, How You Can Help Prevent Nuclear War*, a common U.S. or Soviet intercontinental ballistic missile carries a 1-megaton warhead, containing the explosive power of one million tons of TNT, or 67 Hiroshima bombs. Some U.S. warheads go as high as 9 megatons, equal to 600 Hiroshimas, and Senators Kennedy and Hatfield report that the Soviets have even tested a 50-megaton warhead, equal to 3300 Hiroshimas. Both sides mount several warheads on a single missile, and each warhead can be guided to a separate target. One U.S. missile, for example, could deliver the equivalent of about twenty-two Hiroshima bombs on each of three different Soviet cities. Soviet missiles aimed at the U.S. have comparable power. Some of the Russian SS-18 missiles carry not three but ten 1-megaton warheads, so that just one Soviet missile could deliver to ten American cities the explosive power of 67 Hiroshima bombs each. And that is just one missile. At present the United States has 9400 warheads ready for delivery; the Soviet has 7500. Both figures do not include approximately 30,000 nuclear warheads deployed for intermediate range use or for tactical use on the battlefield.

In short, each side has the ability to inflict hundreds of thousands of Hiroshimas on the other, to lay waste the other's entire land. What is the newest response of the Reagan administration to this? A call to Congress to allocate $4.2 billion over seven years on a civil defense program designed to relocate in emergency two-thirds of the population, evacuating all cities with a population over 50,000. The fantastic

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assumption: that if the Soviets chose to attack us, we would have a full week to lay in a stock of groceries and get into our cars to drive to some quiet place away from the bombs—no mention of the fallout that would follow. Then, believe it or not, after the cities of America have been leveled by blasts that would make Hiroshima look pale and after deadly radiation has spread over the land, we would all troop back into the cities where we came from. (If you believe that, maybe you would also believe that in the event of a warning of imminent nuclear attack, plans for at least one metropolis call for citizens with odd-numbered license plates to stand aside and let those with even-numbered plates evacuate the city first.)

The theory behind the Reagan civil defense scheme: that with such planning (provided, of course, that the Soviet Union gives us a week's notice) the United States could fully recover from an all-out nuclear war with the Soviet Union in two to four years. All this, when experts on the subject say that such a war would mean the end of civilization as we know it. But let Thomas K. Jones, Deputy Under Secretary of Defense for strategic theater nuclear forces present the Reagan case. In an interview in the *Los Angeles Times*, Mr. Jones said: "Everybody's going to make it if there are enough shovels to go around. Dig a hole, cover it with a couple of doors and then throw three feet of dirt on top," he advised in the interview. "It's the dirt that does it."

Given the awful power of nuclear weapons, this is obvious foolishness, but the kind of foolishness that is not the least bit laughable. The civil defense plans of the Reagan administration represent one more effort in a disturbing series of such efforts to suggest that nuclear war is well within the range of rational possibilities. Mr. Jones and his three feet of dirt to the contrary, the chance for national survival and recovery in an all-out nuclear war are nil. If the Soviet Union used only 2000 of its warheads to attack U.S. urban areas, the best estimate is that U.S. urban casualties would amount to 98 percent. There is no civil defense against Armageddon, and that is the hard truth; it is criminal of the administration to suggest otherwise. Instead of appropriating the money requested for Mr. Jones's shovels, Congress should insist that President Reagan begin really serious negotiations with the Soviets—negotiations aimed at stopping and then reversing the nuclear arms race which now threatens humanity's very survival. That would be true civil defense, the only rational kind of civil defense open to us. And as for the Under Secretary Jones, we suggest he find a new line of work.

ZERO IN MOSCOW

Ground Zero Week came to the Soviet Union on April 19. It lasted less than two minutes.

What was the subversive message that caused the K.G.B. plainclothesmen to pounce instantly on seven demonstrators and the banner they unfurled in Moscow's Red Square? The banner read "Bread, Life, and Disarmament." And what was the dangerous appeal contained in the leaflets the K.G.B. seized before they could be distributed? The leaflets called on the Soviet government to shift spending from arms to food aid.

The incident underlines the difficulties facing the European and American anti-nuclear campaigns. The Soviet Union has greeted those campaigns with encouragement, but it will not allow even the most innocuous of peace messages to reach its population through channels not subject to government control. So the pressures exerted on East and West are distinctly asymmetrical.

This does not mean, as some defenders of established Western arms policies have suggested, that the anti-nuclear campaigns are doing more harm than good. It does mean that those elements of the peace movement who are truly convinced that *bilateral* disarmament is the only likely disarmament will have to make their position dramatically clear. One way to do so is to take advantage of the fact that not all representative symbols of the Soviet government lie within K.G.B. territory. Every demonstration of discontent with American and NATO policy—and may there be many!—must be matched by equally vigorous and visible demonstrations outside Soviet embassies, consulates, travel bureaus, etc. The message may not get through to the Soviet people but at least it will reach the Soviet government: that the prospects for backing away from nuclear suicide are dim unless both sides are resolved to back away together.

PRAGUE ADDENDUM

Despite the "systematic destruction" of the Czechoslovak dissident movement, reported in this issue by Robert D. Kaplan, in March Charter 77 managed to issue two statements supporting religious freedom and protesting attacks on the church. Anti-religious efforts in education, it noted, are being stepped up. The government allowed publication of only one theological work and one hymnal in 1981. The weekly Catholic newspaper is an instrument of state propaganda. The number of seminary students has been strictly limited. Courts have even interpreted the law in such a way that religious discussion or praying in a private home could be considered a criminal offense. Charter 77 listed five priests and four laymen recently sentenced to jail for religious activities, one brutal beating, and two mysterious suicides of practicing believers.

Religious freedom ought to be especially valued by Czechoslovakia, said one Charter 77 statement, "a country with a . . . centuries-old tradition of respect for personal beliefs . . . a country that has learned . . . how fatal preferential treatment . . . for a single ideology . . . accompanied by a relentless suppression of others, can be."

LIGHT AND SHADOW

On the night of April 20, Archibald MacLeish died in his eighty-ninth year.

Like the quintessential American he was, he came late in life to reflect on the mystery of evil. "Is God to be forgiven?" asks furious Mr. Zuss in *J.B.* A quintessentially modern question,

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that. As C.G. Jung recognized, it's the kind of question that arises inevitably if you're saddled with a Big Boss Jehovah. "The progress of religion," observed Whitehead, "is defined by the denunciation of the gods. The keynote of idolatry is contentment with the prevalent gods." And in the history of Israelite religion, the Book of Job represents a classic of this genre, iconoclasm at its best.

So where's the idolatry in *J.B.*? On rereading today, it seems less the Big Boss who cows—a setup if ever there was one—than that sunny naif, the pre-lapsarian American Adam, J.B. himself.

A brief history of consciousness helps to see the point.

Ponder: In the ancient world of Athens and Jerusalem, Zeus/Jehovah was a solar deity, identified with the work of literacy, raising tribal man out of the "temples dim" of pantheism and Plato's dark cave. From there to Benvenuto Cellini's exuberant celebration of solar selfhood in the Renaissance, it was but a short step. But ponder this irony too: that just when Cellini was heralding the birth of the modern self, Luther was having dark doubts of the enterprise, and John of the Cross was discovering that from soul's vantage God had *moved*—into the soul's Dark Night. As if to outwit solar high-flyers, bring them back to earth.

Yet, since the seventeenth century, it's been *de rigueur* that Western authors take the part of Job against the Big Sky Boss, who hangs out, as in *J.B.*, on a ladder above stage. Set up this way, J.B. is bound to appear the aggrieved party, morally superior to a bullying God: the King must die (Long live the King!) in order for man to live. But this drama has grown tiresome, histrionic.

As sixteenth century mystics already understood, the divine comedy of our time lies elsewhere than in solar heroics. "Our gods have gone to sleep, and they only stir in the bowels of the earth," wrote Jung. We question the "only" here; but it's not a bad statement to turn us back inside the prison-body, for Plato the cave of illusions, for us the place where the hidden God waits. Archibald MacLeish almost caught the sense of this in those last words he gave, not to J.B., but to the wife Sarah:

The lights have gone out in the sky.
Blow on the coal of the heart
And we'll see by and by . . .
We'll see where we are.

CARDINAL CODY, R.I.P.

On the day before this issue of *Commonweal* was scheduled to go to press, we learned of the death of John Patrick Cardinal Cody, the archbishop of Chicago. Michael F. McCauley's overview of the controversies Cody stirred was written several weeks ago; it was in type, and we have let it stand without change.

Cardinal Cody was not an easy man to understand or, at least at this distance, to like. In his last illness he wrote a letter forgiving his critics—but made it sound like a further accusation. "I wish to let everyone know that I have forgiven my enemies," he wrote; and then, after cataloguing the wrongs he had suffered, he added, "But God will not so forgive. . . . He stands before my former enemies insisting forever with good will that they change." Michael McCauley reports the view of one Chicago sympathizer, "He's an old man and he ought to go to God in peace." So he ought to have, so ought all of us. But "peace," it seemed (again, from a distance), was never John Patrick Cody's natural element, and the lack of peace that characterized his final months was not completely the responsibility of others.

It is this final, unresolved episode that makes it particularly hard to reflect with perspective on "the Cody years." Many Chicagoans we respect, who had never been hesitant to criticize Cardinal Cody's actions when they thought criticism was in order, believed that the Chicago *Sun-Times* was guilty of egregious sensationalism and character assassination in its presentation of the charges that Cody had turned church funds to personal purposes. Others insisted that, by and large, the newspaper had performed a journalistic service. Both groups were agreed that the matter had to be dealt with in a more open fashion than the archdiocese seemed willing to allow. The cardinal's declared attitude, and that of some of his supporters, was unfortunately one that dismissed all criticism of church leaders. "Any accusations against the shepherd also are against the church," he said. "When some people wish to strike an organization, they first attack it through its shepherd." The latter statement is true, but the former is not. The history of the church is rife with accusations made out of destructive intent; it is also starred with accusations made out of love and a concern for the church's well-being.

Cardinal Cody admitted that he had few friends. We suspect that in his last painful months he discovered he had more than he knew. Now he is gone where he needs only One.

Report from Chicago

THE CARDINAL ISSUE

LOOKING OVER THE CODY YEARS

HOW TO EVALUATE the almost seventeen years that Chicago's Cardinal John Patrick Cody has spent as archbishop of the largest archdiocese in the country, years peppered by parades as well as protests, sit-ins and skirmishes with seminarians, squabbles with nuns, and confrontations with priests and laity? Andrew Greeley, who has frequently referred to the cardinal as a "madcap tyrant," estimates that it will take "a hundred years to undo the damage" caused by Cody. The cardinal himself sees things differently. Not long ago, Cody told a local journalist that because of his leadership, "the archdiocese is a better place today than it was in August 1965, when I took office. . . . I did my duty, and if I had to run for election I would be reelected."

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Surprisingly, Cody might well be right — about being reelected, that is. When the *Sun-Times* recently headlined additional charges of financial improprieties regarding childhood friend and step-cousin Helen Dolan Wilson and her archdiocesan pension fund, not a few Chicago Catholics were angry at the paper. Despite all the wrangling, the cardinal still retains a kind of grassroots allegiance from many women and men in the pews, mirroring in some ways the popular support long enjoyed by Chicago's legendary Richard J. Daley. It's no secret that Cody is likely to submit his resignation in December, on his seventh-fifth birthday. And certainly many have sympathy for him because of his age and poor health. ("He's an old man and he ought to go to God in peace.")

For more than six months, ever since the *Sun-Times* disclosed that a federal grand jury was investigating allegations that Cardinal Cody had illegally diverted more than $1 million in tax-exempt church funds, supporters have been writing to Chicago's two dailies, the *Sun-Times* and the *Tribune*, proclaiming Cody "a man of unquestionable godliness," and declaring, "we love our cardinal — long may he live!" The president of the embattled priests' senate and the chairman of the moribund Association of Chicago Priests (ACP) have assured the cardinal of loyalty and support during this "personally distressing time." And, in a rousing tribute, the Black Catholic Clergy of Chicago have staged a rally of some three thousand school children and black Catholics to thank Cody publicly for his educational and spiritual support to the black community. After hearing the cardinal assure them that he would "assist in every way" to clear up "doubts" that had been cast upon him, all joined hands and sang "We Shall Overcome."

To be sure, not all Chicago Catholics assess either the current situation or the whole of Cody's tenure nearly so sympathetically. Two local leaders of the National Coalition of American Nuns made public a letter in which they pointedly urged the U.S. Attorney to "pursue vigorously the investigation of Cody's possible abuse of fiscal power." Likewise, Concerned Catholics of Chicago, an ad hoc group of area priests and laity, have written first to Cody himself, then to both the apostolic delegate and the president of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops, and just last month to the prefect of the Congregation for Bishops in Rome. The letters (1) asked Cody to answer "honestly, publicly and promptly" the questions raised by the grand jury; (2) encouraged some official intervention in the matter because "Cardinal Cody's poor health and the near completion of his tenure . . . only increase the urgency"; and (3) called for specific reforms in Chicago — "financial accountability, shared decision-making via a pastoral council, elimination of the 'corporation sole' status for the cardinal, and collegial procedures to consult the whole archdiocese in the selection of the next archbishop." No one, however, has called for Cody's resignation — not yet, anyway.

Financial matters have been the occasion for controversy throughout the Cody years, but the central issue has been consultation. Some Chicago Catholics still resent Cody's massive fund-raising effort, "Project Renewal," that was to have been his master stroke to finance Catholic school education for every Catholic child. In the end, Project Renewal was a disaster. The lowest amount of money targeted for collection in 1969 had not been reached in 1975.

Other Chicagoans fault Cody for his decision in the early 1970s to reduce subsidies to black parishes and consolidate black schools. In typical preconciliar fashion, little attempt was made to prepare the parties involved for the decision or to negotiate with them. And the already sensitive situation was exacerbated when the archdiocesan financial report — its first ever — showed that almost $3 million had been spent to remodel Holy Name Cathedral. This amount, triple the original estimate, greatly exceeded the $1.27 million spent to aid needy parishes.

Again, Cody recently irritated Chicago pastors when he demanded out of the blue that all parishes in the archdiocese meet a subscription quota for the official weekly newspaper, *Chicago Catholic*. Parishes that failed to meet their mandatory quota would receive bulk mailings of the paper for 40 percent of their registered parishioners and be billed for each subscription. Clerical and lay protests of this characteristically arbitrary decree have had little result.

Similarly, protests against Cody's authoritarian ways by both the unofficial ACP and the officially-instigated priests' senate have been largely ineffective. Both organizations still occasionally grab a headline or two, but it matters little. The ACP has been defanged — partially done in, perhaps, by the fractious Young Priests' Caucus who promoted the unprecedented censure of Chicago's bishops. Cody's criticisms of the priests' senate as unrepresentative have undercut its authority. And senate agendas must be submitted to Cody for approval — yes, he does have veto power.

An unmistakable pattern has emerged in all of Cody's dealings with groups that ostensibly exist to provide collegial consultation. Time and again, Cody has argued that his unilateral decisions were justified because he alone had all the information to make a judicious decision. When resistance has surfaced, Cody and his vicar general, Msgr. Francis A. Brackin, have insisted that adequate consultation had taken place. Almost never, however, were open meetings or hearings conducted; Cody and Brackin find them "nonproductive."

Delays, postponements, cancellations, unavailability, insistence on being the final arbiter and ultimate authority — all have converged to isolate Cody from clergy and laity alike. In 1973, the cardinal admitted to a local columnist: "No, I wouldn't say that I have a best friend. I wouldn't say that I had any truly close friends. Everybody is my friend. No close friends, though. I don't have the time."

Those Catholics in Chicago who are frustrated by official church leadership, but have not entirely given up are shaking their heads in dismay. To some members of the ACP, the recent letters from the Concerned Catholics to the apostolic delegate and to Rome seem to promise little more than a similar series of letters in 1979. ACP leaders had then written to Rome complaining that the cardinal's "arbitrary exercise of

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authority" reflected "an underlying disregard for the human dignity of priests and people." They formally requested an official Vatican investigation. The Vatican acknowledged the letter one year later by directing the apostolic delegate to inform the ACP that Rome would consider only those requests that came from official church agencies, such as the priests' senate. Not so easily rebuffed, the ACP decided to go directly to the pope. Again, the letter was not acknowledged for almost a year. To date, nothing has come of the request.

The cumulative effect of events in the Cody affair could, however, prompt a response from Rome this time. Now a federal grand jury is investigating the cardinal. Now the cardinal and the archdiocese face sixteen-month-old subpoenas that require information related to allegations of improper use of tax-exempt money. Some local journalists have called the whole business Cardinalgate or Godscam. Regardless of guilt or innocence, Chicagoans — indeed, Catholics throughout the country — perceive an urgency for greater accountability from the cardinal.

MICHAEL F. McCAULEY

(Michael F. McCauley is a free-lance writer and editor who lives in Chicago.)

Of several minds: *Thomas Powers*

CHOOSING SIDES

IT'S NOT MILITARY MIGHT WE LACK

THERE IS A CURIOUS claim in the second volume of Henry Kissinger's memoirs. It is that the world is all of a piece. Every nation has its place in the balance of power. A challenge to the status quo in the remotest corner of the globe, even a purely internal challenge, is a challenge to the two great powers. Thus the rise of a leftist government anywhere — even in tiny El Salvador, for example — represents a direct threat to the security of the United States. Since it is the balance of power which maintains world peace, the United States not only has the right but is positively obligated to resist any attempt to change the balance. Presumably the Soviet Union has a similar right, recently exercised in a veiled way in Poland, but Kissinger naturally does not emphasize this corollary of his theory of international relations.

There is a sweeping quality to Kissinger's claim which is quite breathtaking — especially the part about purely internal challenges. The Soviet Union claims a right, in the interest of world peace, to suppress any challenge to the status quo in the socialist bloc of Central Europe — a claim which seems indefensible on its face — but Kissinger goes Moscow one better. He claims a similar right even with neutral nations, in the event one of them threatens to ally itself with the other side.

This sort of geo-realpolitik is hard to swallow for an ordinary citizen, educated in the ideals of self-determination, fair play, the redress of grievances, freedom of conscience, the absolute sovereignty of the people, and so on. As a practical matter, it is hard to see how the United States (or the Soviet Union, which is faced with the identical task) can keep so many lids on at once, more or less forever. As a theoretical matter, it is hard to square a claim of universal interest with our own pride of independence — much less the Charter of the UN. But this only suggests how distant we are from the customary practices of government. On some subjects Kissinger is an uncommonly honest man, and this is one of them. A claim of universal interest is only another way of saying that peace is indivisible; it is the great rule of Munich, carried one step further than it is normally considered polite to go.

We might argue, in fact, that the Munich rule is so ancient it's not a rule at all, but rather a kind of instinct. Great Powers have *always* divided the world in two. As a mental exercise it takes only minutes. As a matter of statecraft it is complex and demanding enough to occupy the whole of the time between wars. Thucydides says somewhere that states do what they can and suffer what they must. This means only that smaller states do not so much choose sides, as try to calculate which of their neighbors is best positioned to force a choice. We need not belabor the point. This is one of the constants of history. It never occurred to Eisenhower or John Foster Dulles that the Indochinese ought to have first say about who ruled Indochina. It never occurred to Kissinger that the election of Allende was a matter for Chileans to decide. It does not occur to Haig now that the people of El Salvador are thinking of their own country first, not the balance of power.

But this is very far from being the case with the rest of us. War in El Salvador is bad enough. We are human; we can feel for the victims. But the really distressing aspect of the war for us is the fact we are being asked to take sides, to judge the rights and wrongs, to accept a theory — well-expressed by Kissinger, but hardly original with him — of what constitutes acceptable change. A revolution, like a divorce, is the most personal of questions. Sympathy is about the best outsiders can offer. How can outsiders hope to judge whether the marriage should endure? These are supremely difficult matters. Their difficulty is suggested by the fact Salvadorans have abandoned argument for war. Now Haig is asking us to do the same thing, and the reason he has been asking obliquely, searching for a minimum assent — the weary okay which might allow intervention — is that we are so visibly reluctant to go down this road again.

I realize I have been using the word "we" pretty freely here. Perhaps you are

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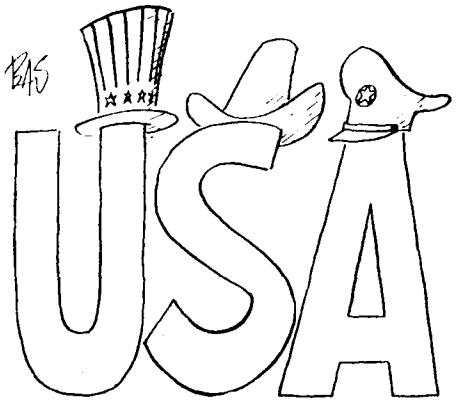
not in confusion about this at all, but clearly see the Soviet-Cuban-Nicaraguan hand and marvel I can be so blind. But I don't mean to say "we" are solidly lined up against Haig, only that it's obvious we aren't solidly behind him. We're divided, as a people and as a country. We can argue about El Salvador but we can't agree about it.

The thing we agree on least is the question of military intervention. Officials in Washington have bulled through a policy of material support for the authorities in San Salvador — Haig has autonomy enough for that — but it is quite possible the guerrillas will win their revolution. It is hardly likely the new regime would be any friendlier to the U.S. than Nicaragua. No one can believe such a victory would discourage other rebel groups in Guatemala. Could Honduras or Panama be far behind?

This is Haig's nightmare, as it was Kissinger's before him — a kind of leftist infection, bringing down one hard-to-defend rightist regime after another. The American press is quick to describe the offhand crimes of rich oligarchs who murder their opponents. It takes a strong stomach to rush to the aid of these brutal ruling cliques whenever they are threatened by a peasant union. Who wept for Somoza? If anyone can be said to deserve his fate, he certainly deserved his. Haig may talk about progress, evolution, the growth of democracy in Central America, but what does he actually get? Secret murder squads, bombings, bodies in the roads and the garbage dumps. The forces of law and order are illiterate teenaged soldiers with American M-16s, or national police in sunglasses and short-sleeved shirts which hang loose at the waist. Their idea of interrogation technique is a bullet behind the ear.

El Salvador has three million people in a territory the size of Massachusetts. This tiny country has suffered tens of thousands of political killings. Murder is the nation's only modern industry. Most of it is conducted by the side Haig asks us to support — the side with condominiums in Miami and bank accounts in the Bahamas. Is it any wonder Haig finds it an uphill job to persuade Americans we may have to send in our own



soldiers, in the event the oligarchs' policy of murder fails to sustain their power?

It is increasingly apparent that Haig's power of persuasion is not up to the task. If it appears the guerrillas are going to win, we won't intervene to stop them. What will happen then? If history is any guide, the new populist regime will postpone elections indefinitely, arrest leading figures in the army and the national police, restrict the purchase of newsprint by the right-wing press, nationalize the banks, prohibit the export of capital, encourage peasants to expropriate large landholdings, exchange ambassadors with the Soviet Union, tell reporters from the *New York Times* and the *Washington Post* the new government plans on a mixed economy, officially denounce continued Israeli occupation of the West Bank, deny the existence of political prisoners, reach an agreement for the export of coffee to the Soviet Union at a favorable price, issue thirty-year bonds at three percent interest to owners of nationalized property, send fifty young men to Bulgaria for pilot training, instruct El Salvador's delegate to the UN to support recognition of the new regime in Kampuchea, elect the widow of a political moderate to the ruling junta, send birthday greetings to Fidel Castro, blame Washington for the deterioration of relations, and invite the Soviet Union to help reorganize El Salvador's security services.

We might argue about the details late into the night. But the pattern is a clear one, and the choice is not pleasant — brutal oligarchs defending privilege and cheap domestic help on one side, a repressive one-party state aborning on the other. Whichever side wins, the people of El Salvador will go on being poor. The strategic significance of the outcome is not so clear. Back in 1961 J. William Fulbright, then chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, told Kennedy he thought Cuba was a thorn in the side, not a dagger in the heart. Kennedy apparently disagreed. Kissinger and Haig certainly do. The broad American public cannot make up its mind. Some think one way, some another. We don't like the regime waiting in the wings, and we don't want to fight to preserve the status quo. There is nothing new or unfamiliar about the situation. We have faced it repeatedly since 1945 — in Greece, in the Philippines, in Vietnam, in Cuba, in Angola, in Nicaragua and El Salvador. We have never been eager to intervene militarily, and are so reluctant to do so now that not even Haig seems willing to propose it outright.

The United States has spent a couple of trillion dollars on defense since the end of World War II. Our strategic capacity is unequaled, despite gloomy remarks of late in Washington, but our conventional capacity is very great too — a navy of 450 ships, armored divisions, transport aircraft, and so on. We sent an expedition ary force of half a million men to Vietnam, and *could* have sent many more. We could invade and conquer Cuba in short order, if we decided to do so, and Russia was unwilling to resort to nuclear weapons to stop us. We have power enough to decide matters in Angola. We have got power enough now to defeat the guerrillas in El Salvador, who are few, poorly armed, indifferently led, denied a sanctuary, and far from sources of supply. It is not military might we lack, despite claims in Washington we need to spend nearly two trillion dollars in the next five years to build up our strength. What we lack is a consensus — agreement on what threatens us, and what we ought to do about it. Nixon once said he feared the United States would become a pitiful, helpless giant, if it shrank from war in the defense of its friends. But we are not helpless, just undecided, and we shall remain undecided until officials in Washington have got something better to suggest than sending in the bombers and the Green Berets whenever the oligarchs tremble before the peasants.

THOMAS POWERS

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Of several minds: *John Garvey*

A POLITICS OF SILENCE

GETTING AWAY FROM THE QUICK FIX

I HAVE PROBABLY been spending too much time with newspapers and magazines and radio news recently, because my current mood is clearly a reaction, but one which I think is worth defending. I am coming to think that we live on noise, and make life and death decisions on the basis of allegiances which are shallow and destructive, but which nevertheless hold us. We believe that unimportant things are important, that we must make choices which in fact we do not have to make; and we trust the information we receive, just as we trust leaders who should not be trusted at all. I am not ready yet to find a place without electricity in the woods where I can get away from this noise, but it is important to call noise by its real name and to record what seems truly stupid about our common life and common political worries. It is important not to let people who seem to live on speed and on self-importance, people like Alexander Haig and most television reporters, define the limits of our world.

The problem is that to a large extent they do. It is in part our fault. We seek the news: it is a distraction, full of interesting stories. It tells about a world which appears to be more interesting and important than our own. It is more clearly storylike than our own dailiness is; it is full of beginnings and outcomes — how will the Falkland Islands story end? Who is the hero and who the villain in El Salvador? Without these stories and other distractions we would have to confront the emptiness which silence always seems to threaten us with. This is not the only reason we pay attention to the news — it will be personally important to know when World War III begins — but it is one of them.

We look at the surface of a quickly told story and think that we see real information about the world we live in — about, for instance, "a threat to our national security." That sounds real and important. But how is that information bred? Here is where our desire for distraction, for noise, becomes dangerous. Politicians worry less about the world's well-being than about how they are perceived; this matters more to their future, which is defined completely, even neurotically, in terms of the power they will be able to wield. When Jimmy Carter felt Republican breath at the back of his neck he got even more hawkish than he had been. Better to shove us closer to the brink than to appear a wimp in the eyes of the electorate. But because Carter looked like a wimp anyway, Reagan was able to make Carter's final plans for a massive defense build-up look not good enough, and he was able to propose even bigger expenditures — he had to, since he had accused Carter of being soft in this area. Carter's need to appear tough and Reagan's need to show that he wasn't upped the ante, which raised our defense expenditures and set off ripples to which the Soviets must respond with a build-up of their own. And of course the Soviets have their own baroque infrastructure and a defense establishment which, like ours, feeds on its own growth.

Much of what is finally presented to us as a problem of our national security in fact begins as a contest for power which has nothing directly to do with any real external threat, but with party politics and the desire to win elections. This extension of personal and party ambitions has a permanent effect on defense and foreign policy. As long as we remain as uncritical as we are of the choices offered us, this will be a problem. Our only acceptable form of criticism now contributes to the problem: we feel that we must criticize a Reagan by voting for a Carter, despite the fact that it is Carter's fear of defeat which has led him to propose unprecedented defense expenditures.

One of our first obligations as citizens or victims, depending on how you feel about the system, is not to believe what they tell you. They have reasons for saying what they say that have nothing to do with the truth about our international position, but rather with personal and institutional ambition. This has been true ever since Kennedy gave us a non-existent missile gap; it continues in Reagan's insistence that we are behind the Soviets, despite that we could more than destroy their entire country, just as they could ours; and Reagan's own Defense Department says in its statement for this fiscal year that we can speak of rough equality between the two superpowers.

Our problem is that the ambitions of our leaders finally do affect international reality. Their ambitions lead to wars, or to the support of governments which make life miserable for those who must live under them.

The commentary surrounding the elections in El Salvador has been intriguing. It's another example of noise. To people who believe in democracy as a sort of religion the elections were encouraging because so many people voted: all those people got out and exercised their franchise! The fact that they voted for the parties of the right, including a hefty chunk for the man who is suspected of having ordered the murder of Archbishop Romero, the fact that the cause of reform and justice has probably been set back by the vote, these things matter less than the exercise of the franchise, ripped out of any decent context. What was not often mentioned is that it is against the law *not* to vote in El Salvador. To be sure, the vote was in part the expression of a terrible weariness, of a desire to see something happen which might end the killing. There are people who saw in the elections a massive repudiation of the left, and this surprised them. According to one romantic vision the left must always represent the deepest aspirations of the poor. But right and left are the twin pincers of a great claw. In between are people who would be quite happy to live

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without either. The vote was interesting, but hardly encouraging.

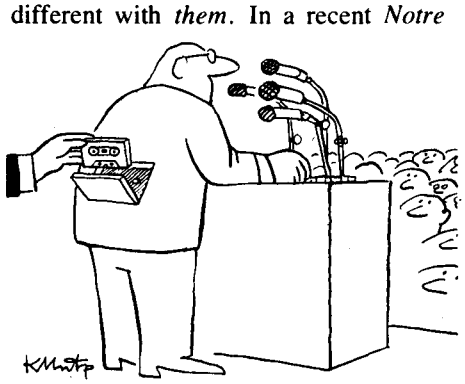
We have been raised on the belief that our ability to choose between the limited options offered us at election time is a proof that we are free. We also tend to believe that the majority is more likely to be right about something than the minority is; at least we hope that through education and information the majority will make the right choice. The "will of the people" becomes sacred, as if there were such a simple thing, or, even if there were, as if it would be a good thing. The abolitionists, after all, were a crazy minority. Most people would have voted a more moderate course on slavery. The electoral process should be seen in the light of Plato's *Gorgias*, which describes the limits of democracy.

The solution does not lie in the repudiation of democracy, and certainly not in an adoption of more elitist forms of rule. But we do have to understand that the rise and fall of political fortunes, the stories we see on the news, are distractions from profoundly important political questions which are scarcely ever dealt with publicly, though they have much more to do with our futures than the results of a presidential election.

Some problems — the arms race, for example — are direct results of the systems we vote for. The answer is not to be found within the system: we would be foolish to leave the solution of our problems to the system which gave them birth. Politicians are now scrambling to follow the people on the issue of the nuclear arms freeze, an issue which would not have come up if for years those same politicians had not routinely voted military appropriations. The leaders of both the U.S. and USSR believe that their plans for the future of the planet are worth threatening the destruction of whole human populations, if in fact they don't someday destroy them. In his deservedly praised *The Fate of the Earth*, just published by Knopf, Jonathan Schell points out that even if we were to dismantle every warhead on earth, we would still know how to make them. As long as sovereignty remains our dominant political consideration, the making and use of nuclear weapons will be a temptation.

We have been encouraged to believe that we must choose between the narrow political alternatives offered us by the party system. It is considered a terrible thing not to vote. But this is nonsense: you really don't have to choose. You have every right, and maybe even the duty, to say that you find the choices offered you stupid and destructive. It is right to refuse the terms that we are offered; we aren't free unless we can do that. Most of the misery in the modern world is the result of people taking some form of national or ideological allegiance seriously. Millions died in concentration camps, hundreds of thousands died from fire bombing, atomic weapons, and napalm, because people were willing to obey orders.

Some of those people obeyed orders because they feared the system they saw ranged against their own, and with good reason; but in answering ideology with ideology, force with force, we contribute to the problem. The hope of all well-intentioned political violence is that we kill now so that someday men can be brothers, as if ends and means could be separated. This is the dream of the left. The right kills in defense of tradition; it believes that bad ideas can be murdered, and those who hold them can be frightened away from their belief. Ever since war began we have seen our enemies as potential cowards; we can terrify them into laying down their arms and backing away from us. Dogs fight that way, but people usually don't. We assume that our enemies will be craven, and know that we ourselves are not. Our enemies know the same thing. Johnson was sure he could bomb them back to the stone age, but knew that *we* could never be bombed into submission. It's always different with *them*. In a recent *Notre Dame Magazine* article, Michael Novak, defending the arms race, suggested that because the Soviets have an unchristian approach to truth they could not be trusted. A few days later I saw Caspar Weinberger say of an arms treaty that the U.S. might have to "rethink our commitment to that language" — words to that effect anyway, meaning that we would have to break it.



All of this is part of what I mean by noise. If our current politics is born in the need for distraction and feeds in shallow waters on our desire for simple answers, the way out is not more noise and more rhetoric. We need to have a politics which begins in silence, and an understanding that there is no quick fix, no ideology or system which will save us. Time spent in the refusal of any distraction — in prayer, in attentive awareness — teaches us how cluttered our own hearts are, how full of anger and resentment and self-importance.

The people who decide our futures ask for and, unfortunately, receive a power over our lives which is crazy, a product of noise. Like us, they are ambitious, confused, envious, divided, and angry. They do not know their own hearts very well, any more than we do. They need approval from the rest of us to go on. Unfortunately, they are not like Tinkerbell — they will not disappear if we refuse to clap for them. But we can make a beginning by refusing to accept the terms we are offered, by understanding that we do not need to accept any choice in an election, and by encouraging our children to be as skeptical of any system's claim as they ought to be of any advertiser, particularly when that claim can lead to the worldwide violence which our leaders would have us believe is an inevitable part of the atmosphere now, something like a new sort of weather.

It is hard to imagine a politics born of silence and self-examination, but we may look to Gandhi for a clue as to how it might be done and to the anti-nuclear movement as a sign of hope. It is certainly more realistic to pursue that course than to accept the choices offered us as absolutely essential by people whose hearts are as confused and divided as our own.

JOHN GARVEY

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THE CHURCH, LIKE THE DISSIDENTS, FACES REPRESSION

Ghosts in Prague

ROBERT D. KAPLAN

PRAGUE, THE FORMER capital of the Holy Roman Empire, is stalked by many ghosts these nights. On account of Draconic fuel conservation measures, streets are nearly empty of pedestrians and automobiles. In the Old Town Square — the center of political life from medieval times through the 1968 "Prague Spring" — only the beer halls stay open. The statue of Bohemian reformer Jan Hus, burned at the stake as a heretic in 1415, seems to brood over the vast expanse. To judge from the government's posture toward the Vatican, one could almost believe that the Communist authorities were bent on exacting full vengeance for the martyr's death.

Religious peace was never a characteristic of Prague. But the present hour evokes the dark years of the fifteenth century, as well as those following the Communist coup d' état of 1948 which sent thousands of Catholics on the path to prison. Church repression in Czechoslovakia is worse than in any other satellite state. The government-controlled media constantly rails against the church in Rome. The Party daily, *Rude Pravo,* said Pope John Paul II "does not miss a single opportunity" to support "counterrevolutionary" forces in Poland: in fact, the paper has used the Polish crisis as an excuse for periodic, long-winded attacks on the Vatican. According to the United States Helsinki Commission, over four-hundred Catholic priests and lay people have been arrested or interrogated here since 1978. Negotations with the Vatican — going on since 1964 — have still not resulted in any basic understanding.

And with the organized dissident movement inside Czechoslovakia nearly wiped out, the eyes of the state police are focusing more and more on religious communities. The regime of Dr. Gustav Husak wants to make certain that the church does not become the next vehicle for expressing anti-state sentiments. This prospect emerged from talks with Prague-based dissidents, ordinary Czechs, resident Western diplomats and members of the Czech government.

A wide-ranging interview with the highest-ranking government bureaucrat dealing with church-state relations underscored the deep suspicion in which Christian communities are held. Denying charges of official harassment against priests, Karel Hruza, head of the Presidium Secretariat for Church Matters, said "Only eight priests have been arrested, not on account of their beliefs, but because they had certain anti-state problems." Mr. Hruza said, "Priests are no judges, and if they have anti-state attitudes they are just common lawbreakers. Religion is a public activity in Czechoslovakia, so we cannot tolerate those clergy who seek to change our socialist sytem."

Mr. Hruza noted that "a very serious problem exists with the underground church movement, which we are determined to finish off, since there is only one legal church system in Czechoslovakia." Talking in a bare, unlit office of the Presidium building in the presence of an official translator and another government official, Mr. Hruza gave the impression that the "underground church" had a considerable following. But dissidents and Prague-based Western diplomats indicated *to a man* that "unfortunately," such was not the case. They claimed the "underground church" movement was small and not necessarily anti-government. Only because Czech law makes prayer gatherings illegal outside of a government-recognized chapel are such activities considered "underground." One diplomat here explained: "By no means is there even the hint of a religious renaissance in Czechoslovakia — underground or whatever — but this government is paranoid about everything."

NEGOTIATIONS WITH the Vatican were to resume in December, 1981, but didn't. Mr. Hruza said, "They have been postponed until 1982." The talks center around the country's twelve bishoprics, seven of which remain unfilled, as the two sides have yet to agree on suitable candidates. "The Vatican is interested in occupying these bishoprics, so are

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we," Mr. Hruza concluded with characteristic bluntness. "We don't want to control the church, but we will not allow the appointment of clergy who are not loyal citizens of the state." He bridled at the assumption that there might not be full religious freedom in his country. "No, you should see how good some of these priests live. There is more religious freedom here than in the United States. For example, I could never be president of your country, because a president must swear an oath on the Bible, and I do not follow this Bible of yours."

Mr. Hruza spoke warmly of one Catholic organization, *Paceminteris* ("Priests of Peace"), whose members, he said, "served both their God and their country." The organization recently received official praise from Deputy Prime Minister Matej Lucan. But all those outside the government claim *Paceminteris* is merely a tool of the regime to split the clergy. Significantly, the country's lone cardinal, Prague Primate Frantisek Tomasek, has gone on record against the organization. Mr. Hruza played down the primate's dissent: "Tomasek is not the head of the church in Czechoslovakia. He only represents Bohemia. The bishops of Moravia and Slovakia support *Paceminteris*. We respect Tomasek, but his title of "cardinal" is a Vatican one only, he is no authority for this country."

Seventy-five percent of Czechoslovakia is Catholic, and to use Mr. Hruza's words, the country has had a "bad historical experience with the Vatican." Church people would undoubtedly concur, as tension has existed between Bohemia and the Vatican since Hus died at the stake in Constance after refusing to revoke his opinions. Even today, Hus is considered a national hero who defended local rights against the alleged abuses of the Vatican. Employing the Hussite tradition for their own ends, Communist authorities refer to Hus as a "great revolutionary." The twin spires of the Tyn Church in the Old Town Square — the center of Hussite teachings in the Middle Ages — are now being renovated by the Czech government.

But the current enmity between Czechoslovakian Communists and the Catholic church has more recent historical roots. It has been argued that the Vatican is now paying the price — a heavy price indeed — for not heeding the advice of its Prague-based clergy in the critical period between the end of World War II and the Communist power grab of February 25, 1948. In that period, the country was ruled by a coalition of Communists and anti-Communists. Pope Pius XII believed, naively, that the Western powers would never tolerate a completely Communist government in Prague. He therefore instructed Prague Archbishop (later Cardinal) Josef Beran not to seek any accommodation with Klement Gottwald's Communists. So when Gottwald's cadres crushed the anti-Communist elements, an era of persecution commenced for Catholics here. Wilfried Daim, in his book, *The Vatican and Eastern Europe* (Frederick Ungar, 1970), maintains that had Archbishop Beran's more conciliatory approach toward the Communists been adopted, the church would be in a stronger position today.

However one interprets those events, it is fact that history and Marxist theory have determined that the concept of the church as a *spiritual* authority goes completely over the heads of government people here. To the party, the Vatican is just another *secular* power interest, trying to gain a foothold in Czechoslovakia.

IN THIS AND OTHER like matters, the Czech regime is the most pyschologically insecure in Eastern Europe. It is unique in the Soviet bloc, as a government completely imposed from outside. In the words of one diplomat here: "If the 80,000 Soviet troops were to leave, the Husak government couldn't buy its way out of Prague."

The government has staked its existence on the assumption that a slow, steady rise in the living standard would keep the lid on dissent. To be sure, in the 1970s national income rose sixty percent and daily meat consumption rivaled that of North America. But the Czech economy now threatens to unravel. The Czechs did not replace their old capital equipment in the 1970s, and the result is an economy that expends more fuel per production-unit than any in Eastern Europe. A 10-20 percent cut in oil supplies from the Soviet Union has necessitated a 17 percent reduction in home heating use, according to a plan approved late last year at a Central Committee meeting. Food supplies are also at a critical juncture. All indications are that the present high level of meat consumption cannot be maintained and that it will fall significantly.

"The next two-to-three years will be slow and difficult," admitted Zbynek Zima, Advisor to the Vice Chairman of the State Planning Commission. Dr. Husak's government apes the Russians in all aspects of policy, and strict adherence to central planning and other Soviet economic practices precludes the kind of flexibility and imagination necessary to deal with the economic challenges. And as the economy crumbles, repression will intensify.

Like the baroque and Gothic monuments of medieval Prague, the Czech economy and way-of-life is slowly decaying. There is nothing dramatic about this decay. In fact, after repeated visits to this central European city, the process almost begins to seem natural. One dissident here said, "Prague is a surreal place, even compared to East Berlin and Sofia."

THE SYSTEMATIC DESTRUCTION of the dissident movement keeps pace with the process of general decay. Though the Czech human rights movement Charter 77 has over a thousand signatories, most have left the country or have been pressured into silence. The latter include former Communist party members, mostly older people, who have ceased active resistance to the government and in return are left alone by the authorities. All, however, have lost their jobs. There is also VONS (The Committee for the Defense of the Unjustly Prosecuted). But VONS consists of the same persons belonging to Charter 77. "One must be honest and admit there are few of us left, and the conditions under which we operate get worse and worse," said one of some twenty or thirty dissidents still active on a daily basis inside Czechoslovakia. Those still active get no respite from the police. Adult members of dissident families are regularly taken into custody for several days at a

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time. Beatings are common. One activist said his daughter was actually slugged in the face in a police station here in December. Torture is used on occasion. And children of dissident families encounter enormous difficulties getting admitted to secondary schools. In one dissident home in Prague, a woman was seen teaching her daughter, who was not allowed to attend school.

Defiantly, a Charter 77 member stated: "If they close down an underground newspaper, we open something else. How can they stamp us out? It is impossible, because the economic situation is getting worse." But the bare statistics disprove that assertion: they prove, that as in the past in Czechoslovakia, naked brutality succeeds quite well.

As even the bravest dissidents will admit, the overwhelming majority of Czechs and Slovaks know this. The most resigned and cynical people in the world populate Czechoslovakia. On a flight from Budapest to Prague, over a glass of Pilsner beer, a Czech sales representative said: "In Poland, they tried to do what we tried in 1968. But, you see, it cannot work. About the Germans and Russians you can do nothing. Better to concentrate on your own job and family." Neither is the younger generation any less pessimistic. In an eighth-grade Prague classroom, a girl student remarked: "It is not wise to consider if the government has any faults or problems. It's more worthwhile to think only about your own difficulties, since even if the government is wrong there is nothing you can do about it."

The population is withdrawing further into itself. The streets of Prague — even on sunny days — are more silent and empty than any in Soviet East Europe. Said one dissident: "People just push ahead with their daily lives, their heads downward, motivated by a combination of fear and primitive materialism." A diplomat joked, "It's a great city to commit a murder in, a body could lie in the street for days before someone would come along and notice."

Sometimes, when the squares are empty and the few people on the streets wear the expressions of sleepwalkers, only the multitude of saints' statues atop the buildings and lining *Karlovy Most* seem alive. Some statues appear to be screaming in agony. Others, like the one of St. Nicholas by the Old Town Square facing Parizska Street, seem to be remonstrating. And the statue of Jan Hus looking out over a square that used to fill up with joyous students? That one seems angry: angry over a church that refuses to do penance for his martyrdom; but surely more angry at an atheistic government that falsely uses his name, in order to wipe out the Christian faith in the land of his birth.

CHALLENGING THE CULTURE

The Hauerwas enterprise

RICHARD JOHN NEUHAUS

TOWARD THE DOLEFUL end of *After Virtue*, a most compelling analysis of our cultural crisis, Alasdair MacIntyre writes: "What matters at this stage is the construction of local forms of community within which civility and the intellectual and moral life can be sustained through the new dark ages which are already upon us." Stanley Hauerwas, the Methodist professor of theology at Notre Dame and one of the most prolific and provocative teachers of Christian ethics today, has frequently acknowledged his debt to MacIntyre. With MacIntyre, Hauerwas insists that ethics is inseparably connected to narrative, to story, to something that began some specific somewhere and is moving toward its end, its *telos*. Only within the context of narrative do concepts such as virtue, honor, good, and evil make any sense. Hauerwas's previous books reflect this preoccupation, *Character and the Christian Life* and *Truthfulness and Tragedy*. The central exploration is expanded and refined in his most recent collection, *A Community of Character* (University of Notre Dame Press, $20, $7.95 paper, 320 pp.) The essays range from family life to abortion to the biblical idea of the kingdom to the flaws in liberal democratic theory. The book is an invitation to examine our familiar discontents in a suggestively unfamiliar way. The invitation should not be declined.

MacIntyre argues that the reasons we have no referents by which to sustain or reestablish a public ethic is that our civilization has lost its story line. There is no publicly recognized way rationally to debate our ends. Modernity has succumbed to emotivism. That is, we have severed "value" from "fact"; every statement that begins with "you ought" really means no more than "I would prefer" that you do this or not do that. There are no agreed upon trans-subjective, or objective, referents for moral judgment. After the collapse of the tradition that ran from Aristotle through Christendom, there were credible efforts to reestablish a world of public moral discourse. Kant's pure reason, utilitarianism, the social contractarians, for

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examples; but today they are only minor sects in the cacophany of our moral confusion, which we disguise by calling it pluralism. As we shall see, MacIntyre and a few others have ideas about how one day light might dispel this presently dark age but, for the moment and in the absence of a shared and public story, the best we can do is to preserve the possibility of moral discourse by living out the stories and pieces of stories that are our own.

Stanley Hauerwas urges us to live out and think out the story that comprehends all other stories, the story that we assert to be the truth, the story of Christ and his church. Admittedly, Hauerwas's is a somewhat idealized church, the church as it would be were it true to itself, or, more precisely, were it true to its Lord. "The first task of the church is not to supply theories of governmental legitimacy or even to suggest strategies for social betterment. The first task of the church is to exhibit in our common life the kind of community possible when trust, and not fear, rules our lives."

In the 1920s Karl Barth, Emil Brunner, and others launched the movement known as "dialectical theology" or "crisis theology." Its journal was *Zwischen den Zeiten* — Between the Times." The "times" in question had to do with the interim between one kind of theology and one kind of world, now dead, and another struggling to be born. On the larger scale, *Zeiten* referred to the revelation of God in Christ and the promised consummation in his glorious return. Similarly MacIntyre and Hauerwas understand us to be between-the-times. MacIntyre's implied time frame, so to speak, is short range, although that may mean decades or centuries. It is until these dark ages are past and it is possible once again to reconstruct a truly public ethic. Hauerwas's time frame is eschatological; the strategy he proposes is to be in effect until the Kingdom of God dispels our confusions. Along the way, according to Hauerwas, the church should not be distracted by efforts, probably vain efforts, to reconstruct a more universal ethic. It is task enough just to be the church. Thus Hauerwas's *Zwischen den Zeiten* is not marked by an intense dialectic (if we can rescue that word from today's pop-Marxists) between church and world. But neither is it a matter of church and world running along parallel tracks, for Hauerwas stresses the frequent and necessary collisions. Rather, the church is to pursue its truth without incessantly looking over its shoulder to see what impression it is making on others.

"The challenge of the political today," writes Hauerwas, "is no different than it has always been, though it appears in a new form. The challenge is always for the church to be a 'contrast model' for all polities that know not God. Unlike them, we know that the story of God is the truthful account of our existence, and thus we can be a community formed on trust rather than distrust. The hallmark of such a community, unlike the power of the nation-states, is its refusal to resort to violence to secure its own existence or to insure internal obedience."

Using the distinction elaborated by Ernst Troeltsch, Hauerwas chooses the "sectarian" rather than the "churchly" model of Christian existence in the world. As one who has collaborated over the years with Mennonite theologian John Howard Hoder (Hauerwas describes himself as "a high church Mennonite"), he does not take umbrage at being called a sectarian. Nor, in the company of other ethicists, does he apologize for being, in a qualified sense, an ethical relativist. Not, to be sure, a relativist relative to God's revelation and the faithful living out of the Christian story; but a relativist in that he is not intimidated by the accusation that he is out of synch with the reasonings of those "that know not God." Our story is the truth and, if the world disagrees, so much the worse for the world.

THERE IS SOMETHING marvelously bracing about Hauerwas. If ethnic borrowing be permitted, his is an exercise in sophisticated *chutzpah*. Moral teaching in most of our churches is marked by spinelessness dressed up as deference to "wisdom from other sources." Timorous ethicists of mincing mind tread with care lest they be thought, God forbid, judgmental. In the face of whatever evil, they rush only to absolution. Then, with Humpty Dumpty's linguistic facility, they pronounce their embrace of the culturally approved to be "prophetic." To all that, Hauerwas says No, and he says it forcefully.

If you are a Methodist, it is liberating, it is deliciously heretical, to declare yourself a sectarian. In the American experience, Methodism is pretty much the center of "culture Protestantism." Methodists have historically accepted, indeed exulted in, the task of providing moral definition for our public life. A few years ago, a German theologian friend who was visiting America spent a day in conference with Methodist clergy. Afterwards, he expressed his amazement. "All day long they talked about what 'we' did do or didn't do or must do, and I couldn't figure out what the 'we' meant. Did they mean 'we Methodists,' or 'we Americans,' or 'we Christians,' or what? Finally I recognized that in their minds those distinctions didn't count. To be Methodist, to be American, to be

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Christian — it was all the same 'we'!" Precisely. Stanley Hauerwas is disaggregating the "we," and it's about time.

Roman Catholics might view Hauerwas's enterprise somewhat differently, however. At first flush, the sectarian option might seem to be particularly liberating for Catholics. After all, if there is any Troeltschian model of the "churchly," it is the Roman Catholic church with its traditional ambitions to establish a Catholic culture. Only not in America. Here, in the ironies and perversities of secular-Protestant America, the Catholic model has been the sectarian model. First with the nineteenth-century "Americanists," but not with broader impact until John Courtney Murray, did Catholics begin to think about a specifically Catholic responsibility for the American polity. Earlier "triumphalists" dreamed of a Catholic America which, in the event of Truth's failure with the invincibly ignorant, would be brought about by a mix of immigration and baby booming. By non-Catholics (and by a good many who used to be called *Commonweal* Catholics) that mindset was sometimes viewed as curious, sometimes as dangerous, but always as sectarian. In fact, the case could be made that, in the rhetoric of anti-Catholicism and strict separationism between church and state, the term sectarianism is almost synonymous with Catholicism. Within American Catholicism then there were integralists who sounded very much like Hauerwas today. In 1948 Father Leonard Feeney was condemned for asserting what he viewed as "the full, unequivocal, uncompromised message of Jesus Christ." *Extra ecclesiam nulla salus est*, Feeney declared, and let the cultural consequences be damned.

"Let the Church be the Church!" the Protestant ecumenical movement proclaimed at Oxford in 1937, and it was a liberating and bracing cry. "Let the Church be the Church!" says Stanley Hauerwas, and for most of mainline Protestantism that would mean deliverance from cultural accommodationism and from pathetic searching for a social purpose that might make up for the loss of much excitement about the Gospel. But to Catholic ears, "Let the Church be the Church!" may sound more like the battle cry of an illusionary militancy that once cloaked defensiveness and retreat in American culture.

HAUERWAS'S INTENT IS certainly not that we should return to the bastions of separatistic identities. Working in a Catholic context, Methodist-Mennonite Hauerwas is nothing if not ecumenical. By "the church" Hauerwas means no one denomination or cluster of churches, he means all those who follow the Way. But if the church is to be "the contrast model" by which the social order is brought to judgment, it clearly cannot include most of the people in the society. The church is "to challenge the moral presuppositions of our polity and society," it is to be "the community of character" that demonstrates the possibility of living by trust rather than by fear. But where do we find this church? Does it have any specifiable reality? Or is it merely a very good idea? Although he does not say so explicitly, Hauerwas's answer is that "the church" is what in venerable sectarian tradition is known as "the believers' church." This is most evident in Hauerwas's insistence upon absolute pacifism as a mark of "the church." Whatever else politics is, politics is the business of getting and using power; and whatever else power is, power is the use or threatened use of coercion. Thus it would seem that Hauerwas's church is by definition excluded from the political process.

Hauerwas resists that conclusion: "The way the church must always respond to the challenge of our polity is to be herself. This does not involve a rejection of the world, or a withdrawal from the world; rather it is a reminder that the church must serve the world on her own terms." To talk about "the church" offering a critique of "the society" assumes that the two realities can be more or less clearly differentiated. It makes no sense in contemporary America where the great majority of people claim, in one sense or another, to be part of "the church." "The church" then includes everybody from the Mennonites to the Moral Majoritarians, from the Catholics to the Two-Seed-In-A-Pod Predestinarian Baptists, Inc. In that case the church becomes almost coterminous with the society and therefore cannot be the agent challenging the society.

A church capable of offering the needed critique must be much larger than the society, representing a transcending community of teaching and loyalty by which the society can be judged. Such a "contrast model" is, however inadequately, present in the universalizing identity of the Roman Catholic church. *Or* the church that offers the critique can be a "prophetic minority" within the society. Put differently, we can either look for an ecclesiastical fulcrum that will give us critical leverage,or we can create one by definition. Hauerwas, most clearly in his strictures about non-violence, chooses the latter course. The choice is not without a certain appeal. In this post-Christendom and anti-Christendom era, many mainline Protestants and many Catholics express a longing for a more pure and primitive church, a church of courageous witness, a prophetic and persecuted minority, perhaps a church of the catacombs.

That is the church we might want to belong to, but it is not the church we do belong to. It is, I believe, a romantic indulgence of — to borrow a term from our Marxist friends — false consciousness. It is a serious flaw in Hauerwas's argument. Hauerwas's believers' church is a more distinctively Christian version of the new sectarianism which some liberationist theologies promote as "the partisan church of the poor." Hauerwas's church is radically obedient to a classic understanding of God's revelation in Christ and is profoundly suspicious of the present or proposed politics of the principalities and powers of this passing time. The liberationists' church is defined primarily by reference to the revolutionary *praxis* of political and economic change. These very different churches are alike in that both are sects.

An ecumenical consensus in the broader catholic tradition is that the church is composed of all who are baptized and confess Jesus Christ as God and Lord. It is a distressingly disparate and unfocused community. It can hardly serve as the fulcrum or "contrast model" that Hauerwas wants and the world needs. Within that church, however, there arise communities, orders,

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bands of specific intent to act radically upon a distinctive understanding of the Gospel imperatives. These are the contrast models that stand in bold witness toward the world, and also toward the larger church, calling it to a stricter fidelity. But within that same church, alongside and sometimes against such intentional communities, are other Christians and groups possessed by a different understanding of God's will. Neither is exclusively "the church," although both may make that claim. For two millennia, serious Christians have been pulled between catholic inclusiveness nad sectarian strictness, between engaging the culture in the hope of transforming it and obeying the Pauline injunction, "Come out from among them and be ye separate" (2 Corinthians 6). The direction of Hauerwas's ethics is set by his despairing of the task of cultural transformation.

HAUERWAS ILLUMINATES brilliantly the reasons for despair. His essay, "The Church and Liberal Democracy," is required reading for anyone tempted to think that Christians can feel at home in a society operating by truth-denying principles, such as ours does. His demolition of John Rawls's theory of justice, which in the name of individualism excludes everything essential to being an individual, is incisive. His exposure of the grotesqueries of *Roe v. Wade* and his argument that Christians should make an unabashedly Christian case for the protection of the unborn are deserving of the widest hearing. Hauerwas has seen the dark void at the heart of a certain kind of liberalism: it is the nihilistic proposition that nobody knows the truth and therefore everyone's opinion counts equally; it is the assumption that there is no substantive morality, only formal rules; it is the situation in which any evil is permitted so long as the procedures are observed.

Hauerwas is deeply skeptical of the notion that the church can posit "a political alternative or ways to qualify some of the excesses of liberalism." That is because "our society offers no ready alternatives to liberalism." But surely Christians within the society can offer alternatives? Hauerwas is not persuaded. "We are all liberals. In fact for us in America, liberalism, a position dedicated to ending our captivity to nature, custom, and coercion, ironically has become our fate." This, according to Hauerwas, is the divide in the souls of American Christians. We are fated to be liberals and called to be Christians. *Qua* Christian, I can only stand in witness outside the courts of the liberal democracy in which it is my fate to be implicated. There, with others of the faith, we nurture the virtues that dare not speak their name within the secularized precincts of the American polity. Hauerwas's is a formula for what I have elsewhere called the naked public square. The naked public square is created when the *agora*, the space in which the business of the *polis* is debated, is sanitized of religiously based values. When pursued far enough, the sectarian option becomes the ally of militant secularism in bringing about a polity that is devoid of transcendent and potentially transforming moral discourse.

Hauerwas does not give sufficient consideration to the degree to which, despite the formal principles of liberal democracy, America public life is still informed by the operative values and beliefs of the American people — values and beliefs sustained by religion and community. Nor does he weigh how very recent in our legal and cultural history are those "excesses of liberalism" which have tried to divorce rules from virtue. The cultural and intellectual crisis he analyzes is so severe, the operation of the formal polity is so out of sync with the social reality, that we are facing also a political crisis. That, I believe, is the most important meaning of the phenomenon we call the Religious New Right. This, I would argue, is not the time to despair of liberal democracy; it is rather a time of opportunity to reconstruct purposefully the public ethic that was until recently taken for granted. That religiously based public ethic, although largely unacknowledged in the official theory of a "secular" society, made possible the functioning of a liberal democracy that is much more complex than its principles suggest.

A public ethic is one in which public reasons are available for the adjudication of moral disputes. In the absence of such an ethic, our inevitable moral disputes turn politics, in the words of Alasdair MacIntyre, into "civil war carried on by other means." Then we are reduced to the battle between Moral Majority and the ACLU in which each strives to impose its morality while accusing the other of trying to impose *its* morality. In some times past, writes MacIntyre, it has been possible in moral disputes to step back and ask in a systematic way "what the appropriate rational procedures are for settling this particular kind of dispute." Moral philosophy once played a critical role in that adjudication, but now moral philosophy itself has fallen prey to the disease of emotivism. "It is my own view," says MacIntyre, "that the time has come once more when it is imperative to perform this task for moral philosophy." Having diagnosed the present crisis in *After Virtue* (published, like Hauerwas's book, by the University of Notre Dame Press), MacIntyre suggests he will now be turning his attention to "a systematic account of rationality" in moral discourse.

Theological ethics should not absent itself from this task of reconstruction. Fortunately, this is recognized by some theologians. The recognition is evident, for example, in David Tracy's recent work on the *public* nature of Christian theology. Most ambitiously, Wolfhart Pannenberg's life's work is aimed at reestablishing theology's role in the universe of rational discourse. His recent *Ethics* (Westminster, $10.95, 228 pp.) contains essays indicating how such a reconstruction of a public ethic might proceed. The erosion of public moral discourse happened over many years; the effort to restore it may take many years more. In the absence of Stanley Hauerwas, that effort will be the more difficult.

Meanwhile, if Christians in their several communities are to have anything of substance to contribute to a new societal ethic, it is imperative that they be faithful to the truth they know. That requires clear moral thinking and a readiness to challenge cultural conventions. Such clarity and challenge is the achievement of Stanley Hauerwas's edition of *Zwischen den Zeiten*.

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Screen

PRYOR RESTRAINT

UP FROM BURNOUT

POOR JOHN BELUSHI. He turned out not to be as funny as we thought he was. (They could write that on his tombstone.) The same thing almost happened to Richard Pryor, you know. He OD-ed. He damn near went out in a blaze of glory. But not quite. In *Richard Pryor Live on Sunset Strip*, he comes back in a blaze of glory again. In fact, when he steps onto the stage at the beginning, he looks as if he *is* the blaze of glory. He's wearing a bright red suit, a black silk shirt, and gold shoes. He's a sunset on the Strip all by himself, a dazzling ball of fire. He looks as if he died and went to hell, and found the same men's clothing stores there that they have on Rodeo Drive. So he bought this devil suit to come back from the dead in. In the ads for this movie, the word "live" in the title is in a different type, as if spelled out in light bulbs. This makes us say it with a hush, as if we can't believe it either — that he's still alive.

I like Pryor. I think he's funny. But I've never thought he was off the charts, absolutely hilarious. A few years ago he did one of these performance films, and I found it amusing, but not great. I feel much the same about the new film. Nonetheless, I have to admit that his brush with death does bring a certain patina, a new aura, to his work. It certainly brings a new level of rapture to his audience, which clearly loved this film beyond all reason. Magic is a word thrown around a lot in show biz, but Pryor's magic is now enhanced by a more potent kind, the sort you have to have not to die when you burn up. Pryor is well aware that he's been born again for his fans, and he's no dummy. He saves the gags about his self-incineration for the end. He knows that they're the ones everybody is waiting for. All the laughs before then he turns into the chuckles of anticipation a good comic can get out of us while he builds up to the punchline.

"Fire is inspirational," he finally says. "They should use it in the Olympics. 'Cause I did the 100 in 4.3." Pause. "One thing about when you're running down the street on fire, people get out of your way. Except for this one ol' wino who wanted a light." Pryor staggers around the stage as if pursuing himself with a cigarette in his mouth: " 'Just le'me get a li'l off the sleeve!' " This is pretty good material, and Pryor does work up to it deftly. Most comics talk about generic experiences, things that might have happened anywhere, any time. But Pryor makes clear early in his monologue that he will talk specifically, about things that could have happened only to him. He talks about making *Stir Crazy*, for instance, one anecdote concerning a real convict he met while shooting the film at an Arizona prison. This man had been sentenced to life three times over, which means, Pryor surmises, that if the man returned after death he would have to start serving another term. "No kindergarten for you, sonny. Back in the slammer." Turning this story toward speculation about what happens when somebody comes back from the dead is Pryor's way of teasing us for wanting to hear about his experience. What happens, the gag suggests, is that you just go on as before.

That's what Pryor himself has done. He's a comic who's never been "burned up" in the other sense of being mad at the world. His humor hasn't been angry, and it's been especially free from black anger. He might tell a joke with a bitter edge to it, as when he explains why eighty percent of inmates in Arizona prisons are black. "They bus them in. Ain' no black people in Arizona." But he quickly shrugs off a militant posture. He says that he's always been indignant about how many black people are in jail. Now that he's actually spent time with some of them, he feels better about having jails. "Why'd you kill everybody in the house?" he asked a black mass murderer. " 'They was home' " was the reply. Pryor comments, mocking his own naiveté, "I always thought black people only killed people by accident."

There is something almost symbolic about his having burned off his skin, for he's never had a specifically black identity as a comic. He's still not the kind who pretends to be a soul brother of convicts, or of blacks in general. Nor does he take off only blacks, as Flip Wilson does. Pryor's facial features don't seem to belong to just one race, and he has an ear for other ethnic accents. He does a whole skit as a Mafioso. A lot of his humor is anthropomorphic because he can create different voices for animals and objects ranging from a cheetah he saw in Africa to the cocaine pipe that blew up in his face. His comedic skill is that of the raconteur. It's the expressiveness of his voice and face that make the material funny, not anything inherently wild or crazy in the material itself. When he does "Mudball," a good ol' boy from Tupelo, Mississippi, who has been one of his staples, Pryor purses his lips and chews on his Southern accent. Doing so gives the impression that this rather slow-witted character thinks everything he says is a real gem. The deliberateness of the delivery makes the banality of the observations funny.

Pryor is such a ball of fire now that he is currently in two movies at once. The second is Michael Pressman's *Some Kind of Hero*. Pryor was able to handle two productions simultaneously because Eddie Keller, the hero of *Hero*, requires no transition from being Richard Pryor. Keller also comes back from the dead, so to speak, when he returns after six years as a POW in Vietnam. Having lost his best friend (Ray Starkey) there, Eddie comes home to learn that he has lost his wife, his mother, and all his money, including the back pay the army owes him. Freaked out, Eddie robs a securities courier, and then has to fence the proceeds to some dangerous Mafia types. Yet, like Pryor himself, Eddie leads a charmed life. In Pryor's monologue in *Richard Pryor Live* the world is pretty benevolent despite one's troubles. Even that Mafioso Pryor mimicks makes sweet with him when Pryor is stupid enough to pull a gun in order to collect a nightclub fee. The gangsters in *Hero*

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aren't quite that affable, but everyone else is, from Eddie's hooker girlfriend (Margot Kidder) to the rat in his cell in Vietnam. Scriptwriters James Kirkwood and Robert Boris have put Eddie in a world where Richard Pryor can feel right at home.

Having burnt himself half to death with cocaine, Pryor could step on stage in *Richard Pryor Live* and say anything he wanted, and we would go along with him. He has the license of Lazarus. We are accustomed to comics who take all manner of liberties with life, who treat us to the most grotesque and far-out views of it imaginable, without having anything like Pryor's credentials for doing so. Yet Pryor himself does not do so, amazingly. The only wisdom Pryor has to offer is that, as he says at one point in his monologue, "People are the same everywhere. The ones that work in the airports in Africa f— over your luggage just like they do in New York." None of life's hassles ultimately seem worse to him than that battered luggage. That someone who has virtually come back from the dead should take such a normative, unremarkable view of life seems very encouraging. He has gone to the other side, and come back the same good-natured goof he always was. Pryor continues to do the whole repertoire of ethnic types — Mafiosi and blacks and WASPs and Mudball. His comedy still aspires to the universal humanity they represent, and now he's had perhaps the only human experience that might validate such routines. This does give them a new dimension, a certain resonance and bounce they never had before.

COLIN L. WESTERBECK, JR.

STUDYING ALTERNATIVE RELIGIOUS MOVEMENTS

Saved from the sixties

PETER CLECAK

THE BRIGHT SIXTIES; the gray seventies: critics on the liberal and radical left have regularly cultivated variants of this perspective on recent American culture and politics. The sixties form the centerpiece, a hopeful moment between the sterile, conformist fifties and the constricted, lonely, self-absorbed seventies. In many instances, critics have stressed what they consider perversions of the sixties idea of personal fulfillment, especially in the seventies. When stripped of its left-wing communal and political contexts, the search for fulfillment is said to divide individuals against one another, to intensify loneliness, and to promote greed. Under these circumstances, the search for self-fulfillment yields illusions of gratification and liberation which neither satisfy individuals (for long) nor advance the cause of general social justice. In the seventies, then, America allegedly deliquesced into a squalid time of personal "selfishness" (Tom Wolfe's "Me Decade"); cultural "narcissism" (Christopher Lasch); "decadence" (Jim Hougan); political incoherence and political "reaction" (Henry Fairlie, speaking, one supposes, for the *New Republic*).

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The many autopsies of the corpse of sixties hope have turned up different descriptions of the fatal process: death by some combination of cooptation, inner exhaustion, and altered circumstances in the larger culture and society. Since no general agreement exists concerning the original shape (or shapes) of hope in the sixties, not all commentators lament its presumed passing. Some critics welcome the demise of the counter culture; others celebrate the collapse of political radicalism, or certain articulations of it. Nearly all critics on the left, however, agree that the seventies was a bleak decade, a time in which the cultural and political changes they had envisioned in the sixties seemed less and less likely to come about. Furthermore, few of the unanticipated developments of the seventies, especially those of a religious, or quasi-religious character, were welcomed in higher circles of criticism. In fact, spiritual responses to fundamental questions of identity, community, and society typically evoke derision. They have been regarded as superstitious evasions of a personal and social responsibility, symptoms of a civilizational malaise rather than elements of a restoration.

In *Getting Saved from the Sixties* (University of California Press, $19.95, 364 pp.), Steven M. Tipton avoids such hackneyed readings of popular spiritual and moral concerns. Though he holds many of the presuppositions prevailing in the left's view of the American sixties and seventies, Tipton comes at these decades from a set of essentially moral concerns shared by such critics as Robert Bellah (who contributes a Foreword to *Getting Saved*). Constituting one sector of what might be called the moral left, these cultural critics are mainline Protestant, or perhaps post-Protestants still fascinated by the idea of ethical coherence, yet emotionally disaffected from what they apparently consider a bloodless religious tradition. In search of renewal, they have come to admire, or at least to sympathize with, other sources of spiritual energy manifested in the counterculture and in subsequent alternative religious movements.

The product of nearly ten years of research, participation, and observation, *Getting Saved* is at once an exercise in moral reflection, sociocultural theory, and sociological reportage of the highest quality. The study is held together by Tipton's central questions: "What are alternative religious movements about? What do they do?" His answer comes in two parts. First, such movements "enable sixties youth to make moral sense of

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their lives." Second, these movements "synthesize moral meanings important to the larger culture." Tipton's study focuses on three alternative groups: the "Living Word Fellowship" (LWF), a neo-Christian congregation; the "Pacific Zen Center"; and *est*, Werner Erhard's variant of the human potential movement. All three movements are based primarily in California, giving the study something of a far-western tilt. Moreover, the membership of each group contains a disproportionate representation of young people, "sixties youth" who came to initial consciousness in that decade and passed into their twenties and thirties during the seventies.

EACH MOVEMENT DISPLAYS a version of salvation and moral coherence, a promise intensely sought by many members of this age cohort. But Tipton is alive to differences. He carefully delineates the social backgrounds of members: the neo-Christians are drawn largely from the lower-middle-class or blue-collar sector of society; most of the Zen practitioners are educated "drop-downs" from the white upper middle class; and graduates of *est* emerge primarily from families in middling white-collar echelons. In their very different specifications of salvation—their beliefs, rituals, and practices—these movements respond shrewdly to the social backgrounds and recent cultural experiences of their members, and thereby provide a measure of continuity. The LWF, for example, replaces drug-induced ecstacy with pentecostal styles of worship; the Zen community allows for a transition from cooler sorts of chemical highs to the nonattachment of advanced meditative states. Interweaving extensive, often striking, interviews with his own reflections, Tipton draws sharp portraits of the spiritual life and moral concerns of the group as well as fascinating accounts of members' relationships with one another; their modes of courtship, cohabitation, and marriage; their attitudes toward work; and their prevailing views of culture, society, and politics.

Tipton's masterful portraits form elements of a larger design. Rather than regarding the seventies simply as a time of moral exhaustion and cultural fecklessness, he discerns in this decade an occasion for serious if not altogether successful moral reflection and cultural adaptation. Tipton neither rejects the expressive ethic that gathered momentum in the sixties, nor does he lament the failure of the countercultural and radical political movements to give it articulate intellectual and practical form. He rather views the expressive ethic as vital and enduring, yet inadequate and incomplete in its fluid, romantic forms. Thus far, it has proven incapable of sustaining modes of existence which yield answers to serious moral questions and satisfy other demands of adult life in a post-modern, bureaucratic social order.

Emerging in response to the enfeeblement of cultural forms embodied in the biblical, rationalist, and utilitarian ethics of the larger culture, the expressive ethic of the counterculture lured people, especially young people, into bold visions of salvation and hopeless traps of personal confusion. The alternative religious movements of the seventies, Tipton maintains, permitted young people to be saved: saved in more or less conventional theological senses, and saved also from their former selves, from becoming permanent bearers of the moral and existential conundrums of the sixties. In so doing, such movements as the Living Word Fellowship, the Zen Center, and *est* preserved the expressive ethic of the sixties by supplying a missing ingredient, namely a context of "order and regularity . . . a measure that lasts." In this reading, the decades of the sixties and seventies are seen as culturally connected in important ways, rather than as disjointed, as so many critics contend. Tipton concludes that

> . . . alternative religions . . . draw from the old targets of biblical religion, rational humanism, and utilitarian culture itself, as well as from non-Western traditions, in order to synthesize their ethics. In this respect they are *religious* in the literal sense that they bind together heretofore disparate elements within a pluralistic culture, revitalizing tradition as they change it . . . From diverse moral meanings these religions form alternatives to utilitarian culture (or variations of it, in *est*'s case) better adapted to survival within utilitarian society than was the counterculture, because their ideas are more coherent, their movements more stably institutionalized, and their members' lives more regulated.

Getting Saved is an important book: it provides a brilliant examination of a slice of American civilization in the sixties

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and seventies, one which must figure in subsequent attempts to understand the main shapes of culture and politics during these years. It was, I gather, also a very difficult book to write. A highly charged phenomenon, one unpopular in intellectual circles, the emergence of religious movements raises personal questions which, Tipton reminds us, we cannot evade. "What do *we* go by?" he asks. Those who find vitality in traditional answers may dismiss alternative religious movements easily, perhaps facilely. "But if . . . we find ourselves unsure of what to go by, unmoved by our received ideas and symbols, and uneasy in the world around us, what then? We cease to be onlookers. "Eager or unwilling," Tipton declares, "we have already joined . . . [practitioners of alternative religions] in a cultural drama where their efforts to renew tradition or transform it offer us cues. Whether we take their example as paths to follow or avoid, possibilities to test, or puzzles to solve, the answers they give us about how we should live cannot simply be dismissed."

FAIR ENOUGH. But we must question the value of the "cues" purveyed by alternative religious movements. Here I disagree in part with Tipton's judgments. I do so no doubt largely because I fall between his categories. The claims of biblical, rationalist, and utilitarian ethics still seem powerful to me, though not altogether coherent and persuasive. And like nearly everyone else in America, I have been touched by the expressive ethic, though not, I prefer to think, hobbled by it. I therefore remain "uneasy" in the world, yet in *and* of it. Although the paths to salvation charted by alternative religions strike me as possible ways of approaching the necessarily vague end of fulfillment, I consider them limiting paths, ones which I neither follow nor recommend.

Tipton is more tolerant; he is even generous to a fault. Recognizing the difficulty of discovering coherent ethical positions in a pluralistic society whose members inhabit many realms at once, he nevertheless admires coherence, perhaps overzealously. It may be that certain survivors of the sixties are better adapted to life in a utilitarian society as a consequence of joining movements which provide coherent moral ideas, stable institutions, and regular daily lives. Such coherence may require sweat and sacrifice; it even may be preferable in some instances to a seeker's statistically likely social alternatives. Nevertheless, it is intellectually, morally, and imaginatively too easy.

Coherence comes at the cost of amplitude in these misguided searches, an abandonment of what Christians refer to as a more abundant life. For one thing, the movements he examines are fiercely anti-intellectual, not simply critical of a social caste, but hostile to the life of the mind: "All you have to do is obey His Word," one member of LWF claims. The world of alternative religions is a world of know-nothings, of people determined to shed whatever knowledge they may have acquired in an effort to annihilate consciousness. For another, the movements (with the partial exception of *est*) require individuals to turn themselves over to charismatic leaders: a religious prophet, a Zen master, a slick supersalesman.

Moreover, members of the neo-Christian cult and the most serious Zen devotees submit themselves to total institutions. All of the followers are encouraged to retain a grandiose sense of their future roles (and in this respect are saved not from the sixties, but rather from the seventies). The neo-Christians, for example, not only believe in physical resurrection, but in their own physical immortality: they are preparing themselves to govern the world, following wholesale destruction and judgment. Zen practitioners regard themselves as set apart to show others the face of the future. Graduates of *est* also believe that they create their worlds, and provide an image of the collective future, though I should guess that most of them invest their energies exclusively in grandiose personal visions: "A graduate writes, 'Dear Werner, This week while driving around I realized that the world is shaped in such a way as to allow everyone to be on top of it at any given time.' " What these groups reveal, then, is the prohibitive personal and social price of achieving mere moral coherence in contemporary society.

Though he often maintains a healthy distance from his subjects, Tipton seems to me frequently too willing to accept the critiques of culture and society proposed by members of the various groups. All of them turn on simplistic dualisms: ideals and expectations which do not fit the world as they perceive it — unexamined ideas and unexamined realities. As one LWF member put it: "One person tells you to do one thing, and the next person says to do the opposite. 'Get a job, get a haircut.' Or 'Turn on, tune in, drop out.' Or 'Support the President,' and someone else says, 'Impeach Nixon' or 'Stop the War, ' or whatever it is, you know. It makes you crazy." Of course, Tipton displays an infinitely more sophisticated sense of the difficulty of sorting things out, and he earns his perspective by an honest intellectual labor. With the possible exception of some Zen practitioners, however, his subjects do not.

Perhaps because he shares their opposition to utilitarian culture and society — the world of cost-benefit analysis, diluted forms of Christianity, and scattered embodiments of human-potential ethics —Tipton comes perilously close to passing from sympathetic understanding to condescension. This practice of "praising the victim" — which by no means is confined to the moral left — mars Tipton's portraits of marginal movements. More importantly, it may cloud judgments of their probable influence on the larger culture and society. Of course, Tipton does not claim that the movements he studies are images of the future, or even desirable alternatives in all their particulars. But he does suggest that such movements offer examples of what coherent resolutions to cultural and social dilemmas might look like in terms of abstract directives or ideals. Illogically, he then indicts the dominant culture and society by citing internal tensions between the presumed ideal achievements of alternative movements and the generally unacceptable modes of practice (guruism, vegetarianism, etc.) they prescribe for their privileged members.

In the end, I find Tipton too sympathet-

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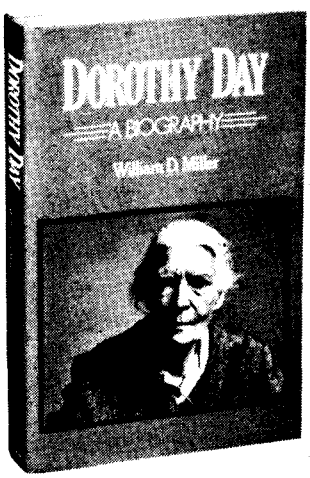

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ic to the aims of alternative movements and too quick to excoriate contemporary American civilization. As a consequence, the central American cultural drama of the sixties and seventies is thrown out of focus. In these decades, the search for fulfillment — for syntheses of personal salvation and a piece of social justice (often only a thin slice) — represented the primary thrust of American civilization. Cultural options widened dramatically; social options broadened considerably, though far less extensively. There was, as a consequence, both a remarkable democratization of personhood and an increasing confusion among citizens concerning the nature of fulfillment. As Tipton rightly suggests, neither novelty nor reaction triumphed. Individuals and groups rather synthesized novel and traditional elements variously in the course of specifying the terms of their fulfillment. But I think that the main centers of action in this drama, and the most admirable ones, were in the larger culture and society.

Certainly the ascendance of the expressive ethic powerfully affected American civilization in the sixties and seventies, frequently in salutary ways. But such embodiments as Tipton discusses seem to me cultural locations of minor significance. The Living Word Fellowship, for example, cannot be taken as a representative example of the powerful revival of evangelical and Pentecostal modes during these years, for although some third-force Christians may *hope* to elude physical death by being "raptured out," only crackpots *declare* that they surely will escape death. And the Zen Center obviously is marginal in spite of tenuous links to ecological concerns in the larger society and the chic rhetoric of Tipton's primary political exhibit: California's Governor Jerry Brown, a figure lightly regarded in most political and intellectual circles.

Tipton's groups, then, finally call attention to realizations of the worst tendencies of the quest for fulfillment — tendencies evident to one degree or another in the radical movement and in the counterculture, as well as in the Christian revival and in the regions of the secular therapeutic search. But these *tendencies* toward totalization — of ethical schemes, of institutions, of daily life — were resisted by most Americans. Not ignored, for they comprise elements of risk in the quest for personal fulfillment, but not wholly welcomed either. The tens of millions of Americans who constitute the principal actors in the cultural drama of these decades went about the difficult search for fulfillment more quietly, less singlemindedly, and, in the end, perhaps even more bravely than those who joined themselves to sects (or cults) which promise salvation on the cheap while exacting the price of studied innocence — of life and of death.

Books: A NEW HEAVEN & A NEW EARTH

RELIGION AND SEXUALITY

THREE AMERICAN EXPERIMENTS OF THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

Laurence Foster

Oxford University, $19.95, 363 pp.

Rosemary Haughton

WHEN a society is well established, with recognized and respected systems of social relations enforced not only by law but by public expectation and habit, any discontent at the working of the system is fairly well contained. If the discontent is private and domestic it can seem even to the discontented themselves to be aberrant and a reason for guilty feelings. If it is publicly expressed it is regarded and treated as either criminal, subversive, or pathological. But in times of social upheaval old systems show their weaknesses and are called in question, and the questions are no longer the ravings of lunatics or traitors but real questions to which sensible, patriotic, and idealistic people may try to find answers.

This book looks at some questions raised and answers worked out by men and women who experienced that period of extreme fluidity in American history which preceded the Civil War, when a new nation was trying to find new patterns, when inherited models of moral and social behavior were being stretched and twisted to fit new circumstances, and often broke under the strain. In this situation many deeply religious and sensitive people were beginning to hope that the confusion which was breaking down older and inadequate patterns might prove to be the opportunity to create a better order, a way of social living truly in accord with the design of the Creator. Laurence Foster has chosen three of the most significant and consistent attempts which were made to live out in daily and earthly life a vision of human and divine relations which could be a reflection of, and a preparation for, the perfect community of heaven or of the resurrection. But the purpose of this study is not merely historical, for the author is asking us to perceive in these earlier struggles and achievements the same urge to discover new and better ways which is now so important a movement of our own far more troubled and confused era. Perhaps this search is the only really important movement of our times, or at least the only hopeful one, so it becomes important for us to reflect on these earlier experiments, and to notice the elements which shaped the thinking behind them, the conditions which favored or hindered their emergence and growth, their strengths and weaknesses, the goals they achieved and the nature of the rocks on which they foundered. The author does not labor the parallels. He simply tells the stories of three mighty struggles to reshape radically the traditional patterns of human social and therefore sexual relationships, and allows us to make our own applications. The stories are inescapably pertinent and important.

This is not a study of the relation between religion and sexuality in general; it

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CROSS CURRENTS

how far can you go?

A QUARTERLY REVIEW to explore the implications of Christianity for our times

SOULS & BODIES

by DAVID LODGE

The editors of *Cross Currents* will go pretty far — in encouraging you to laugh at themselves (yourselves?) by reading David Lodge's wickedly funny (and sometimes disturbing) SOULS AND BODIES — the original English title was *How Far Can You Go?* — by offering this fast-selling new novel ($12.50) *plus* a year's subscription for $15 (including postage). You can also choose 5 of our recent much-in-demand reprints FREE!

Lodge's novel follows a group of (London) Catholic university students from the early 50s (when an infant *Cross Currents* was publishing Mounier, Rahner, Teilhard, Buber, Congar, Barth, Weil, Murray, Guardini and Tillich) through Vatican II and the varied crises of today (when *Cross Currents* is featuring articles on women's spirituality, liberation theology, the meaning of contemplation, and basic Christian communities, by people like Sölle, Gutierrez, Panikkar, Schüssler Fiorenza, Sobrino, Metz, Conn, Ruether, Bruteau, and Archbishop Romero.

Graham Greene calls Lodge's novel "a magnificent book . . . enormously enjoyable." *Cross Currents*' reviewer, judging it "an amusing, informed, thoroughly enjoyable novel," explained why the English title, "How Far Can You Go?", was appropriate to the subject matter: "The story concentrates on the sex lives (and sexual hang-ups) of the characters, and the question was often asked by courting Catholics about their pre-marital sexual contacts. It points also to their concern (and the author's) with church reform. He asks: 'In matters of belief (as of literary conventions) it is a nice question how far you can go in the process without throwing out something vital.'"

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The prophet-founders of these groups were individuals who struggled intensely to understand themselves and the troubled world around them. Instead of withdrawing into psychosis or attempting to confront complex social problems directly, they developed a different strategy. They conceived a new way of looking at the world which they felt compelled to share with others, and eventually they attracted a following. . . . Working together, prophet and followers internalized a new set of values and then went on to create a functioning communal order based on those values.

Laurence Foster
Religion and Sexuality

is both narrower and broader than that, and the subtitle indicates the limits of the study by choosing three experiments only — the Shakers, the Oneida Perfectionists, and the Mormons. But the breadth of it lies in the fact that the focus on sexuality simply indicates the point which is always most difficult and sensitive in attempts to find new ways of relating socially. The founders and prophets of these three groups — Ann Lee, John Humphrey Noyes, and Joseph Smith, and their immediate disciples — did indeed feel that reshaping sexual and familial relationships was fundamental to their work, but that work was the creation of a new humanity, rejecting the corrupt and corrupting ways of a world which they saw all around them, destroying homes, oppressing women, fostering rivalry instead of community. They were surrounded by the facts and the results of sexual exploitation and degradation, and were sure that there had to be a better way to live sexually than the traditional monogamy which seemed to have failed so signally to create harmony and cooperation in the society they knew. Their solutions were very different, though all based their vision and justification firmly in Scripture. The Shakers called men and women to the freedom of celibacy, seeing sexual feeling as the root sin which caused the fall. The solution at Oneida was "Complex Marriage" in which everyone was regarded as "married" to everyone else, partners changed frequently, special affection was discouraged, and children were raised communally. The Mormons chose polygamy, though not immediately, and in each case the attempt to adapt to such new patterns caused much pain and struggle, and was only achieved by a combination of strong and utterly convinced leadership, intensive group criticism, and last but not least the reluctance to return to former situations from which the new life offered freedom. The sexual adaptation was seen to be essential to a new kind of life, however difficult the change might be; it was not pursued for its own sake.

The Perfectionists disbanded after about thirty years, the Shakers have almost died out, and the Mormons, though still flourishing, are no longer polygamous or much different from other citizens in their social arrangements, and it is easy to dismiss such experiments as the ephemeral aberrations of unbalanced people. But to live one's social and sexual life in a way quite contrary to one's training and other people's expectations, and to do so within a coherent community life that really works for a generation or more is no small achievement. That these experiments did not last may point to misconceptions in the founders' minds about psychology or theology; it does not devalue the dedication, sensitivity, urgency, and love with which these people struggled to create a new heaven and a new earth. Nor can we let ourselves off the hook by dismissing them as failures. The questions they raised are no less urgent now, their conviction that it doesn't have to be like this must be shared by any who take Christianity as more than a matter of personal spirituality. Perhaps we can avoid some of their mistakes, but we can hardly avoid undertaking the tasks they undertook. This book, which is fascinating in its own right, should urge us on to do some thinking and acting which might not be unworthy of these earlier pioneers. They were fallible, often misled, a little crazy, but they knew the situation required radical solutions and they were not afraid to risk even life for the vision they saw. We cannot pretend that anything less will meet the case now.

Practices encoded in myths

THE ANTHROPOLOGY OF GREECE

Louis Gernet
Johns Hopkins University Press,
$24.50, 378 pp.

Mary Lefkowitz

THE ANTHROPOLOGIST who studies ancient Greece cannot question the natives and observe their customs; instead he must discover patterns of social and religious behavior in what ancient people wrote down. Social theory may suggest what to look for, but not how to find it in documents originally intended for audiences who needed no explanation of the practices the modern anthropologist is striving to describe. It is mainly due to Louis Gernet that methods have been devised for extracting from the reluctant data information about basic systems of values in the Greek world.

Gernet's approach was essentially intuitive and eclectic. He used every scientific technique at his command, especially linguistics. He made himself familiar with all the documents, not just legal codes and lawyers' speeches, but the famous works of literary fiction. He examined usage not only of particular terms, but of the practices they described, in whatever language they were expressed. So, for example, he was able to show that some of the strangest events in mythology were not simply fantasies of primitive minds. When Prometheus is nailed and chained to the rock, he is not being subjected by Zeus to an arbitrary punishment; rather he is undergoing the penalty regularly inflicted on men convicted of capital crimes, *apotympanismos* (literally, "beating-out"), a slow, painful, and humiliating death. When Jason arrives with one foot bare, his uncle Pelias has reason to be frightened, for Jason has adopted the stance of a

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person come to claim his patrimony. When Althea throws the firebrand that represents her son Meleger's life into the fire, in order to kill him, more than sympathetic magic is involved: the soul of the royal son in ritual and myth is linked to the hearth, itself an enduring symbol of the life of the family.

Gernet looked at the practices of other cultures, but never tried to speculate about the existence of universal symbols or archetypes; he was interested in discovering what was special about Greek society. For him the prehistoric period described in myth was not specially creative or mysterious but, more simply, pre-literate. Myth encodes practices that people in subsequent periods of history were able to articulate and develop. One cannot find in Gernet's work reference to the romantic notion that primitive man lived in an ideal, classless society. Instead he shows how legal codes and social stratification existed from the earliest times. Disappointingly, perhaps, customs do not so much evolve as adapt or change. Monotheism, whether pagan or Christian, does not seem to have effected any immediate moral improvement. If the Greeks can be said to have been superior to other people, it is in their ability to indicate through ritual and custom the importance of such social organisms as the city, and to recognize, through ritual, that its ethical demands could be different from and even opposed to those of the family. Also the Greeks' willingness to recognize the reality of the unseen led them to deduce the existence of such intangibles as legal right. Philosophy, perhaps the Greeks' most enduring legacy to surviving Western cultures, develops directly from the central concerns of Greek religion. The aim of the philosopher, like the priest and the prophet, is to acquire the privileged knowledge and powers accessible otherwise only to the gods.

Since Gernet's work has been available in French to scholars in article form since the 1920s, many of his most familiar ideas can seem deceptively familiar. Structuralists in particular have applied his cross-disciplinary approach to problems Gernet did not have time to explore. But much recent work seems almost to impose patterns on the evidence, where Gernet tended to let the data he had assembled speak for itself. Where certain scholars now insist on finding polar oppositions such as nature versus culture, Gernet spoke with sensitivity and subtlety about the lack of fixed distinction between town and country in Greek life before the Hellenistic age. Rigidity and dogmatism are completely absent from his writings. He speaks of the Greeks with respect, and sometimes with admiration, but he always regards them from a distance and never uses them to represent or address the concerns of his own time or society.

The essays collected in this book do not present an ordered survey of Greek culture, but rather a series of tantalizing glimpses into a past that perhaps will never completely be revealed. Some are short general articles; others longer and more technical. They are arranged by subject, Religion and Society, Forms of Mythical Thought, Law and Pre-Law, Social Institutions, Philosophy and Society, but in fact each one of these different topics is in some way considered in every essay.

Gernet himself would have made no such claim, but certain of his discoveries shed light on patterns of human behavior that seem at first to have little to do with Greek law or religion. Do all men tend to enact prehistoric customs without being directly aware of their significance, like the Greek tyrants who practiced endogamy and behaved on occasion like mythical kings? Does Greek legal procedure, which does not draw a clear distinction between proof (as we think it) and a convincing account, help explain why Greek historical writers so often failed to see a difference between past and present, or hearsay and eyewitness evidence? Since Gernet's lively questioning brings immediacy to events in the distant past, it is a pity that the translators were not able to represent his writing in less stilted and obscure English. For example, what translators Father D.B. Hamilton, S.J., and Professor Blaise Hagy call, rather vaguely, "the Mythical Idea of Value in Greece," is translated by R.L. Gordon in *Myth, Religion, and Society* (Cambridge 1981) as "Value in Greek Myth," a far more accurate representation of Gernet's style and emphasis.

Unfulfilled promise of nastiness

PUBLIC MAN, PRIVATE WOMAN
WOMEN IN SOCIAL AND POLITICAL THOUGHT

Jean Bethke Elshtain
Princeton University Press, $25, $6.95 paper, 378 pp.

Margaret Canovan

In the early days of women's emancipation, before modern feminists had got them on the run, confident male chauvinists had ready arguments against the involvement of women in politics and culture. Women's minds, they used to say, don't have masculine lucidity: they lack a sharp sense of logic and relevance, a virile ability to impose form upon matter. Instead, they are rambling, easily diverted, lacking in control over their ideas. Above all, women lack control over themselves: they are emotional and unbalanced, they take everything personally, they lack detachment and objectivity. But intellectual and political activities demand the subordination of personal interests and qualities to public standards. Where an artist or statesman is concerned, what matters is not the private person, her strong feelings and good intentions, but her public achievements. And (so the men used to say) when women emerge from the private world of personal relations in which they belong, they demonstrate how unfitted they are to appear in the harsh light of the public sphere.

To the annoyance of sensible women, many present-day feminists seem to be doing their best to prove the old male chauvinists right. Too often, their books are rambling, incoherent, embarrassingly personal, and awash with great tides of uncontrolled emotion. What with their tone and their harking back to Mother-images and nature mysticism,

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one is reminded of the dark Dionysian fury that (according to the Greeks) had to be kept under in the interests of Apollonian calm and objectivity.

In view of the traditional claim that men alone can appreciate public values, the idea of looking at the relation between private and public life from the perspective of women seems, on the face of it, an interesting one. Anticipation is heightened when Ms. Elshtain announces in her Preface that '*Public Man, Private Woman* is a nasty book.' Alas, she does not live up to her promise. Her heart is clearly in the right place, and the book is not nasty at all: in fact, its faults are not private ones of nastiness versus niceness, but public faults like lack of clarity, economy, and form.

Ms. Elshtain's project has three stages. First of all, she looks (with tedious wordiness) at "traditional political theory," Plato to Marx, from a feminist perspective. Not surprisingly, she finds a good deal to criticize. She is particularly hard on Plato, whose utopian schemes she sees not as an early case of women's lib but as a defensive response to fear of women (especially Mother). At several places in the book, indeed, she repeats that political institutions have been to a large extent a defense erected by men against Mother. She offers no evidence for this, but then neither did Freud for his theories about the primal Father and the foundation of states.

After taking the political philosophers to task, Ms. Elshtain moves on to scrutinize contemporary feminism. This is the best bit of the book, and the author shows courage and good sense in her criticisms of the various versions of feminism, "radical," "liberal," "Marxist," and "psychoanalytic." In fact the book livens up so much at this point that one wonders whether the first section was really just an alibi, designed to salve the author's feminist conscience and demonstrate that she hadn't sold out to the men.

The book ends with a chapter on "Reconstructing the Public and Private: Toward a Critical Theory of Women in Politics." This, clearly, should be the crux: the point at which the author should explain just what the relation between public and private life ought to be. The chapter is disappointing, but it is also revealing. Ms. Elshtain often talks good sense: for example, she points out that any serious feminist politics would have to treat individual women as *subjects* and not just objects; and that means, for example, listening to other women even when they are saying unpalatable things (campaigning against abortion, for instance). She also provides a vigorous defense of the family against feminist attack.

The curious thing about all this, though, is how *little* light it sheds on what is suppposed to be the book's subject, namely the relation between public and private. Incredibly, at no point in all her 378 pages does Ms. Elshtain even make clear what she means by the terms, while her proposals for a "politics of compassion" derived from the feminine standpoint of "maternal thinking" suggest that she has never detached herself sufficiently from a private point of view to appreciate what is involved in the existence of a private world. As Hannah Arendt and Richard Sennett have tried to explain, civilization means the possession of a public world outside each one of us, with its own traditions and standards, its own concerns. These public values, whether political or aesthetic, are not derived from personal values, and may often contradict the latter.

Perhaps this can be made clear through an example; one much nastier than any-

REVIEWERS

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thing Ms. Elshtain says. In typically mushy style, she proclaims in her Acknowledgments that her book's "deep, enriching connection" with "real life" stems from the fact that her four children, Sheri, Heidi, Jenny, and Eric, "were never hustled out of sight, earshot, or mind as I struggled with this text." Now, from a private point of view this does great credit to the author — she is clearly a good mother. But the standards of the public world are not concerned with Sheri, Heidi, Jenny, and Eric: public criteria are interested only in the question whether, as an author who has laid out her work before the public gaze, she has or has not written a good book. And I regret to say that if Ms. Elshtain had set back her children's development by cuffing them around the ear, telling them to keep quiet, and concentrating on getting her argument clear, she might well have written a much better one. "Maternal thinking" is no help in writing political theory: why should it be any more useful in political action?

A buoyant voyager for justice

ABRAHAM WENT OUT
A BIOGRAPHY OF A.J. MUSTE
Jo Ann Ooiman Robinson
Temple University Press, $22.50, 321 pp.

John L. Stipp

THIS is the first in-depth account of the life of A.J. Muste. When he died some fifteen years ago most Americans were unaware of it, as they were of the doings of his long life (1885-1967). Even to the more knowledgeable portions of the reading public his name was not exactly a household word. Though no one whom *Time* once featured as the nation's number-one pacifist could be thought of as a nonentity, he comes closer to it than the actual record allows. For that record portrays a life that touched and influenced most of the large movements for change of this century. One example of his little known touch is the development of industrial unionism, which most persons would probably ascribe to John L. Lewis and the C.I.O. Actually it was pioneered by Muste and for long was simply known as Musteism. Another example is the nonviolent crusade for racial justice. Martin Luther King, Jr. is usually thought of as its creative exponent, but he himself knew better. Without Muste, he once said, "the American Negro might never have caught the meaning of nonviolence."

The list could go on, as it does in Robinson's well-researched work. The author's central theme is the buoyant voyaging of Abraham Johannes Muste in search of a just and loving society. The voyaging took him from his native Netherlands to the U.S.; to ordination as a Dutch Reformed minister; to doctrinal travail that led him into less orthodox pulpits; to pure pacifism that, for a while, put most of even these pulpits out of reach; to short-lived apostasy as a Trotskyite Communist; to permanent re-dedication to the Christian view that, in his words, "love is the basic reality of the universe"; to campaigns in support of threatened civil liberties; to new and increasingly dangerous struggles to expand civil rights to all citizens; and finally, to a passionate and aggressive stand against the bloody Vietnam madness.

A sharp and abiding ambivalence regarding goals and the paths to reach them marked his voyaging years. The goals were clear enough — society transmuted into a congregation of the gentle, a community in which every person is naturally concerned for the reasonable well-being of others. But like the biblical Abraham, as Muste "went out, not knowing whither he went," looking "for a city which existed — and yet had to be brought into existence," he encountered crossroads and detours. *Abraham Went Out* leads the reader through some six decades of these encounters.

His early years were devoted to conscience-honing, designed to yoke himself and his (often changing) parishes into full social-gospel life. But the Great War, as it was then called, prodded him into pacifist attitudes and practices so

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advanced that he eventually ran out of tolerant congregations. For a while he found refuge and renewed strength in a Meeting of the Society of Friends. But growing concern for the plight of the common worker pushed him into radical action unsuited to Quaker mores, in particular his deep and persistent involvement in the much-publicized Lawrence strike of 1919.

The next ten years were spent directing the complex program of Brookwood College, a "free school" for working-class adults. It was during this period that he slowly drifted into espousal of Communist doctrines and strategies, and hence a repudiation of his long-held Christian principles. By 1934 he had come to believe that violent revolution was the only way out of the nation's jungles of economic injustice. Since, in his view, Stalin had betrayed the revolution, he turned to Trotskyite Communism. Muste being Muste, it was a mistake in which he did not long abide. It was the only major decision of his life that he came later to look back on with shame and regret.

Professor Robinson's sensitive and disciplined account of this period is one of the outstanding sections of the book. She describes the re-conversion scene in the church of St. Sulpice in Paris, and adds, "To exaggerate the importance of this moment in the life of Abraham Muste is impossible. It is the point toward which all the forces of his formative years had pushed him, and the point from which all the activities of the remaining thirty-one years of his life would emanate. . . . In the final moment of truth the demands of passion, of the mind, and of the conscience, were reconciled. . . . His Trotskyite colleague, James Cannon, had been prophetic (if negative) in fearing that 'the terrible background of the church' had marred Muste for life." The marring is manifest in the experiences of the remaining three decades of his life — in his correspondence with Einstein and Niebuhr and Tillich and Ho Chi Minh and Dorothy Day, with the destitute of the ghettos, with establishment moderates of the fifties, and with the alienated youth of the sixties. In the ever widening circle he drew, he took them all in.

In the years before World War II, Muste served first as director of the Presbyterian Labor Temple in New York City and then, and throughout the war, as executive secretary of the Fellowship of Reconciliation. After the war he turned to the struggles for civil liberties and the extension of civil rights. Robinson organizes four chapters on these struggles around the themes "dialogue and persuasion" and "protest and resistance." There was plenty of all four, with A.J. in the thick of most of it.

One of the longer chapters of the book is the last one, "The Pacifist and Vietnam: The Final Years." Muste's opposition to the war expressed itself in many ways, ranging from trips to both South and North Vietnam, to seemingly endless demonstrations on the home front. He died (in his eighty-second year) long before the war ended, with only the hope that later times would bring the bloody catastrophe into a perspective that would serve world peace.

In her closing paragraphs Robinson makes sure that the evangelist for peace and justice is perceived as a real live person. She portrays him, for example, at Shea stadium cheering for the hapless Mets, as enjoying ballet and opera, and reveling in the antics of the Marx brothers. As workaday saints go, his sense of humor was on the robust side.

Abraham Went Out allows one of two conclusions to be drawn. One is that Muste's life was a failure, glorious perhaps, but a failure nevertheless. Rather than diminished or even diminishing, the ways of violence and economic injustice seem greater now than in Muste's day. The other focuses on a time adjustment — all great societal metamorphoses, such as Christianity and the Renaissance, require centuries to establish themselves. Even today the Muste vision is reflected in developing attitudes and practices — the anti-war stance of youth; the entrenched position of union workers; the irreversible obsolescence of Uncle Tom.

As Muste would have it, each reader of this fair-minded account of his love-possessed life will judge which of the evaluations is the more fitting.

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In Brief

JOE MCCARTHY AND THE PRESS *by Edwin R. Bayley, University of Wisconsin Press, $16.50, 270 pp.*

The daily papers, in New York and Washington as well as Wisconsin's small towns; the wire services; television — Mr. Bayley, who covered McCarthy as a reporter for the *Milwaukee Journal* and is now Dean of the Graduate School of Journalism at Berkeley, has carefully studied their handling of the Wisconsin Senator's "crusade." The press neither created McCarthy nor smeared him, as critics on the left and right have charged. McCarthy, however, had an instinctive gift for exploiting the press's appetite for quick, dramatic news and its indifference

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to slow, laborious follow-up. Bayley reviews this material in what may be excruciating *detail* to those for whom "McCarthyism" is only a flat political phrase — but *excruciating* detail to those for whom it is a living memory.

PETER STEINFELS

UNSUSPECTED ELOQUENCE: A HISTORY OF THE RELATIONS BETWEEN POETRY AND MUSIC, *by James Anderson Winn, Yale University Press*, $18.95, 381 pp.

James Winn, a Yale English professor and a flutist of professional competence, manages his difficult and ambitious topic without favoring or shirking either poetic or musical issues, and in so doing produces a monograph of value to both disciplines.

Provocative hypotheses abound. "Polyphony . . . was initially a metaphor, an attempt to create a musical equivalent for the literary and theological technique of allegory." Far-reaching harmonic experiments by Italian madrigal composers "began as attempts to find musical equivalents for the persuasive power of Petrarchan rhetoric." An effort to restore the primacy of words over music "by denying all the ways in which music was *not* like speech" was at the heart of the humanist movement beginning around 1575. "The clarity of tonal grammar was . . , the single most important factor in the growing independence and appeal of instrumental music in the eighteenth century." "The Romantic literary myth about music affected music itself, and when it did, the resulting music came to cherish and prolong harmonic ambiguity in much the way that Romantic poetry had celebrated and enacted syntactic ambiguity."

There are problems. Winn relies far too heavily upon quotations from modern-day analysts; his constant shifting from one author and viewpoint to another precludes a coherent overriding style. This is more than mere quibbling, for the book is most clear and penetrating when Winn himself does the synthesizing and writing. His musical examples disappoint: they are not so much simplistic as underexplained.

Least convincing is the discussion of this century's music. Undue significance gets attached to the abolishment of tonality by practitioners of the twelve-tone system when in truth many eminent twentieth-century composers never rejected tonal restraints. Winn overinterprets Charles Rosen's theories on dissonance. He equates chance procedures with total serialization, precise opposites.

Enough. This is a work both challenging and stimulating. It taught me much.

DERRICK HENRY

Correspondence

(Continued from page 258)

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how to respond, how to survive, how ultimately to prevent it. Thinking the unthinkable is the only way we ever will make progress in disarming the nuclear threat.

MIKE EVANS

Time of trouble

Villanova, Pa.

To the Editors: Dan Jackson's reflections on "The 'Troubles' — in Ireland and Bronx" [Feb. 26] are eloquent and heartfelt testimonies to this "time of the troubles." His analogy between the frustration of the Irish people generated by the shameless tyranny and injustice still practiced by Margaret Thatcher's England and the same sense of futility experienced in the Bronx by our economically tyrannized neighbors is frighteningly accurate.

Whether the injustices are social, political, or economic, those upon whom they are practiced often are attracted to a response of violence born of hopelessness. Though we reject this option, we must recognize its source. For, if we do, we can see that Bryan Hehir's plea for "Consistency and Human Rights" (also Feb. 26) is a plea for the only means available for a non-violent world.

If Gulf & Western can destroy the union of sugar refinery workers in the Dominican Republic to maximize profits, then Russia can destroy Solidarity to minimize rebellion. If England can deny human rights in Ireland and our friends can do it in Brazil and El Salvador, then why should we decry similar atrocities in Afghanistan and Poland? If we do not realize that purity of ends does not justify the use of ugly means, Dan Jackson's sons will never understand his agony.

Freedom cannot be won by the slaughter of innocents — even if the butcher claims to hate our enemies. Balanced budgets cannot be secured by a planned unemployment rate of twelve percent. Such direct economic tyranny will not affect those who paid for Reagan's election but it will surely buy America an economic atmosphere that breeds violence and facilitates an empathy with the Irish people.

DAN REGAN
Director: Peace & Justice Program
Villanova University

Inhuman beings

Berkeley, Calif.

To the Editors; I was deeply moved by Dan Jackson's insightful and beautifully written article entitled "The 'Troubles' — in Ireland and the Bronx" [Feb. 26]. It brought back a flood of warm memories of the years I taught at Iona College in New Rochelle, New York, and Dan was a student — the best — in my Greek, Latin, and Mythology classes. It unleashed also the heart-breaking memories of our war in Vietnam that Dan recalled. "That knoll at Kent State. A Memphis balcony. Rice paddies. The kitchen floor of some L.A. Hotel," where Robert Kennedy was killed.

But now, the anxieties have peaked. We are flirting with the extinction of the human race.The greatest amount of our tax dollars goes not to feed the poor, to cure the penniless sick, to improve the schools, to enable impoverished students to enter professions of their choice, but to fight and finance wars — deadly chemical wars which no one will survive. As *Commonweal* points out, our chemical weapons budget is $1.4 billion. . . . .

To call a human an animal is considered a grave insult. Yet animals kill only for food. Humans kill for food, too. But we do not stop there. The sun never rises over our planet Earth on a day when the so-called *humane* humans are not shooting or dropping bombs to kill each other. And one wonders, where and when will it end?

What is it that drives us to destroy everything we love and cherish most — our children and grandchildren, families and friends, this beautiful planet Earth with its rivers and oceans, woodlands and forests, rainbow-striped canyons and sky-soaring mountains. And, above all, the many races of people who inhabit it.

DENA JUSTIN

Correction

A typographical error in last issue's "Correspondence" column identified George Weigel as a scholar at the World With War Council. The organization's name, of course, is the World *Without* War Council.

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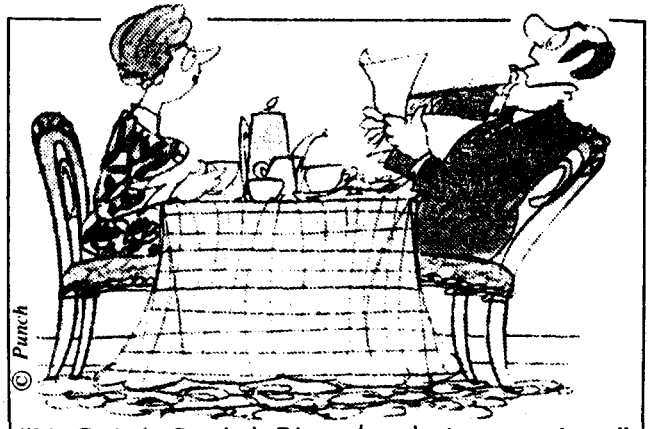
Dear Reader,

We often wish we had the power — to grab new readers or new members of the Commonweal Associates — that this cartoon attributes to the promotional material of the *Reader's Digest*.



"My God, the Reader's Digest doesn't give up easily . . ."

Instead, we must rely on an occasional letter, announcements like this one — and the reputation of *Commonweal* itself. Fortunately, that has been sufficient to insure the crucial financial support of the generous individuals listed below. Their help alone has kept us alive and kicking at a time when too many other journals have been forced to curtail their operations. Once again, we express our heartfelt thanks.

We've heard talk of someone determined to escape the threat of war — so he went to live in the Falkland Islands.

In New York, the *Daily News* is struggling to stay alive — although it remains one of the largest circulation newspapers in the U.S.

Moral of those stories? That there are no sure-fire guarantees of survival. *Commonweal* and its work remain dependent on the generosity of the Commonweal Associates and the loyalty of its readers.

We hope that even more of the latter will join the ranks of the former. We ask you to fill out the coupon on the back cover.

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